

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 456.—VOL. XVIII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 27, 1872.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[RUNNING THE GAUNTLET.]

VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.

CHAPTER I.

"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"

Scott.

SILENCE—utter, mysterious, eternal—that silence which hides behind it a mighty tumult, seeming like a sleeping world before the flood.

These rocks, pre-Adamite, shoot upward in grim phalanx to the clouds, and hold their bare summits to the sun and rain of countless years, changeless as the snows which have glimmered on yonder peak since time was.

Two arms, outstretched on either side, hurl back the churning waves of an advancing ocean, and hush behind its reef its sullen roar.

A pool, black as Egyptian darkness, fabled to be bottomless, whose surface has never been disturbed by a ripple within the memory of man, lay between the arms at the base of the cliff.

"Saw you ever so ill-favoured a spot?" cried young Hereward, drawing up his horse on the narrow stone gallery which skirted midway the awful wall, and looking above and below him, with a shudder. "If our brutes were not sure-footed, our fate would be but an indifferent one—eh, Watt?"

"If you will just move on, Master Hereward, I'll answer all questions when we round out of this ugly trap," returned the other horseman.

The youth laughed, and the high-bred animal he bestrode, in obedience to his command, bounded forward with a loud snort, and striking a train of sparks with her iron-shod hoofs upon the flinty causeway, she scrambled up a rough path which scored the elbow of the arm, and gained a plateau which overlooked the country for miles.

The young man sprang from the saddle, returned to the edge of the precipice, and gazed down rather anxiously for his fellow traveller.

In a few minutes, to his evident relief, he heard the admonitory "So-ho, lad!" of his attendant, followed speedily by the appearance of the same, be-

striding his sturdy yellow cob, with knees firmly clasping him, as the animal carefully picked his way among the fallen debris of stones and earth.

"Welcome from the circles of Pandemonium," cried Hereward. "I was beginning to fear that my jade's heels had kicked you over."

"Near enough, master," replied the servant, wiping his heated face with his hand and dismounting.

He was ridiculously short when thus seen beside his burly horse. A long neck like a heron's, a face which expressed about equally inquisitiveness and importance, immense black eyes, which surveyed, unwinkingly, every object they rested on, and a shaggy fringe of bristly black hair all round his cheeks and chin, gave him a comical resemblance to a chimpanzee.

It was at his solemn air, though, and not at his appearance that his young master laughed, while flinging himself upon the turf beside his steed's busy teeth.

"Ay, you may laugh and laugh again, Master Hereward," grumbled the man, "now that we're through the danger, but mind you, sir, while you sleep at nights I'm not so idle; and I like to know where each day's journey is likely to bring us, and I tell your honour, whether you believe me or not, that we've just passed through 'Godiva's Tryste.'"

"And must nobody laugh at 'Godiva's Tryste,' my good Watt?"

"It's well to ask that, master," said the man, portentously, "for it was told to me, as the blessed truth, that spirits haunt this crag! Lady Godiva jumped from the causeway down yonder, hand in hand with her lover, to escape the cruel match her father would have put upon her. And they say that phantoms are often to be seen standing on this very place where you and I are now; that voices can be heard whispering and shrieking, just the same as if Lady Godiva Kentigerna and her lover were going through it for ever and ever."

"Kentigerna," cried the youth, eagerly. "Then we must be near the end of our journey—we must be close upon Kentigerna Tower."

"Not far away, Master Hereward, and I bless the day"—here the weird-looking fellow took off his eccentric-shaped velvet cap and looked piously upward to Heaven—"which finds my dear young master so near home; and if your sainted father could only see this day—"

"By Jove! old boy, I believe that's the tower!" exclaimed the youth, springing up from his recumbent attitude and pointing to an adjoining crag, from which a mantle of mist had just been blown by the rising breeze.

Magnificent was the view thus slowly forming beneath their gaze, as the white wreaths of mist moved from peak to peak and furled themselves in light puffs as the wind blew more strongly.

A wild, crag-locked shore was that, serrated by caverns deep and mysterious, where the surf dashed with a heavy reverberation resembling the discharge of artillery. Upon the summit of the nearest of these crags a massive tower, built of colourless stone, had reared its frowning front to the storms of two hundred years.

Guarded in front by a deep moat, and behind that by a wall of immense thickness, it was also rendered unassailable from the rear by its position, which was on the extreme precipice, and fully three hundred feet beneath roared the waves, here unbroken by any sheltering projection.

As the youth, with shading hand before his eyes, gazed at this formidable pile the deep rose tints which the lowering sun had cast over it—making the gray walls glow with something of a genial warmth—faded to a quick blackness, and an angry cloud fell so low as almost to engulf it.

"Now if I were superstitious like you, Watt," said Master Hereward, mischievously, "I should take that for an evil augury, and tell you that the old fog, Chastelard, was going to prove too much for my father's son, and that the tower was not for me."

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated Watt, "and, sir, I wouldn't believe your augury if you did say so. You haven't come all this way from another world, as one might say, travelling for ten months and

more to obey your father's dying command, only to—By my faith, master, I don't know what you might call that!"

"What? I've been listening to it for some time too. It is the sea, isn't it?"

The little man gazed about him with eyes which seemed to grow bigger and bigger until they grotesquely occupied half his face, then he cautiously got down and pressed his ear to the grass. What was it? A dull, unbroken sound, rising into sharp concussions and sinking again; like nothing so much as the drone of a monster wasp as it strikes itself against the window pane.

"Master Hereward," said Watt, with a perplexed and grave look, as he sprang to his feet, "it's a warning for us to leave this cliff; yes, master, you mustn't make light of it, for it's a warning to you that Godiva's Trysto was the death of one Kentigorne, and—"

"All right, Watt; the warning jumps with my inclinations vastly well. Let's be off from this and get to the village, for I'm as hungry as a wolf."

He vaulted into his saddle. Watt followed his example, and cautiously they began skirting the brow of the mountain by a footpath which wound gradually down into the valley, as yet completely enshrouded by mist. So busy were they guiding their horses through the intersecting footpaths which began to vein the hill that they had no more time for comment upon that continuous noise, which, to Master Hereward at least, was as yet unexplained, until, upon rounding a bluff which before had concealed the greater part of the valley, the mystery was solved. Clustered about a narrow though tumultuous river was the village of Kentigorne; and clearly discernible from the travellers' lofty position was a multitude of people gathered in the streets, whose hoarse, excited cries had been the cause of Watt's panic.

What had occurred so to irritate this mob of village rustics?

They uttered yells of rage, mingled with triumphant laughter, and the declamations of the ring-leader rose harshly above all.

Rushing together with waving hats and braided clubs, shapeless hammers and uplifted stones, this living stream swarmed towards one given point, like flies upon a piece of offal; and seemed by their gestures to be animated by one mighty spirit of destruction.

"Why, Watt, the whole village seems to be in a state of insurrection!" ejaculated Hereward, stopping short and gazing wonderingly down.

"A sorry welcome for you, master!" cried the man.

"No, indeed!" laughed the youth, with a gallant uprearing of his well-knit frame upon his magnificent horse. "Tis perhaps the best welcome one could wish, to see them snarling thus under the old fox's paw. Faith, I think they would love him best when in the teeth of a good fox-hound. Ha! what are the ruffians at, though?—a lady!"

The throng had changed their position a little, and to the young man's clear vision had appeared a momentary glimpse of a female figure on horseback, seemingly dragged down the next instant by a hundred hands, while a piercing cry rose above the clamour.

Before Watt could reply to his master's last words he was galloping with break-neck recklessness down the mountain side, heedless of the path, and intent only upon flying to the rescue of the helpless.

"Oh, Master Hereward, Master Hereward!" grumbled the servitor, putting his cob in motion, "you'll run your nose into other people's business fast enough, I warrant me."

And he trotted unwillingly after him.

The clamour of the mob increased as young Hereward cleared the last dyke and dashed into the road, and the words which reached his ears caused him to spur on his animal with greater impetuosity.

"Make her go afoot; we've trudge'd many miles to pay for the feathers she wears so lightly!" cried a shrill, spiteful voice.

"Barefoot," growled another; "she ought to have learnt that abroad, along with her guitar-playing."

"Burn her for a French spy!" shouted a chorus.

"No, no!" yelled a ring-leader, mounting a horse-trough the better to discharge his bursts of eloquence into the ears of those nearest him; "who ever led a pig by the tail? What'll old Chastelard give us for that? Only the nose end of a rope, and an extra screw of the taxes. No, no! Comrades, we'll put a ring in his nose, we will, and stop his rooting in our potatoes!"

"Hurrah!" roared the crowd, not hearing a word, and hustling him from his temporary rostrum in their enthusiasm. "Hurrah for the rights of the people!"

"Whist! your bawling, like a parcel of stuck pigs!" cried a broad, fat man, driving his elbow emphatically into his neighbour's ribs. "Here comes a stranger!"

The fellow who had been bellowing at the top of

his voice for ten minutes without cessation shut his mouth to gather breath, and opened his eyes wider to stare at the figure of a horseman, who was now resolutely pushing his way through the outskirts of the mob, administering now and then a hearty blow with the butt of his riding-whip upon the knuckles of any one bolder than the others who would venture to seize his bridal rein, and sending him howling back upon the wall of people on either side.

'Twas Hereward, who, with flashing eyes fixed upon the central figure of the motley throng, seemed oblivious of all but a desperate determination to reach her.

He saw a young and beautiful lady in the grasp of half a dozen grimy hands, her plumed riding-hat torn off and crushed under foot, and her small Arab horse stamping furiously upon the ground beside her and snapping viciously at those who would clutch his bridle, as if he knew the peril of his mistress and would guard her if he could.

Her dark cloth habit was torn in many places, and her small hands were bare, while her pallid, most lovely face seemed like a delicate flower about to be whirled away by the fury of the storm.

"Ruffians! would you harm the lady?" cried Hereward, sweeping them right and left in his impetuous career.

All eyes turned at that ringing voice to gaze at the daring youth who thus addressed them, and a universal murmur followed.

The lady also turned her glance in search of him, and her lips seemed to frame the words:

"Save me!"

"Tis dastards' bravery to molest a woman," shouted Hereward, again, "and dastards were not wont to people the valley of Kentigorne."

"Who are you?" asked a score of tumultuous voices.

"One who hates cowards, as you shall know to your cost some day," answered the youth, casting his dauntless blue eyes over them.

"He's a constable!" muttered some, shrinking back.

"He's bold to come here," growled the mass, threateningly.

"A friend of Baron de Chastelard's," sneered others, closing round him.

They pushed and jostled each other, struggling which should be the first to drag him from his saddle as they had dragged the lady, but he foiled them with quick address.

Spurring his horse, and at the same time drawing the curb strongly, the animal rose on its haunches, and paved the air so alarmingly that a ring was cleared with surprising celerity.

Hereward repeated this feat until a passage was formed before him, when he sprang quick as lightning to the lady's side.

"Fall back, rascal!" he shouted, presenting a dagger full in the face of the hairy ruffian who grasped the sylph-like waist of the lady in one vast hand.

Uttering an imprecation, the man recoiled before the sinister weapon thus thrust upon his attention, and in the general panic of surprise which ensued the youth and the lady were left alone in the ring for one instant.

"Your hand," muttered Hereward, bending low.

She gave it immediately.

"Mount!" exclaimed he, holding out his spurred foot.

The lady did not waver for an instant, but, with the strength of extreme terror, sprang lightly as a bird to the saddle before him, and balanced herself with the address of a thorough horsewoman.

Now was the gallant youth ready for an escape which required some finesse.

Having acquainted himself with the position of affairs by one quick glance round, he fixed upon his plan, and carried it through, before the excited mob could concentrate their strength so as to be of any avail to prevent them.

They were gathered in the market-place, which was enclosed on the one side by a row of houses, and on the other by the river, which, as has been said, ran through the midst of the village.

Turning his back upon the narrow, foaming torrent, which was shut out from him by a dense wall of rioters, Hereward feigned to be cutting a passage to the street through the thickest of the throng.

His determined courage, combined with the kicking of his now furious mare, were rapidly driving his would-be assailants before him, and those on the river bank rushed forward to throw themselves between him and his presumed path of escape, when suddenly he wheeled round and dashed down the slope to the river, happily left unguarded in the confusion.

For a moment his mare, though violently spurred forward, balanced herself upon the brink of the rude torrent, her fore-feet beating the air convulsively; then, with a wild cry, she leaped half the distance, and struck the water midway.

'Twas a gallant leap, and spoke well for her blood and superior training, but for a brief moment she seemed stunned by the force of the shock; at the same instant the water around them was struck by a shower of stones, and the rioters ran, howling with rage, down the bank, while others of them set off to cross the bridge at the end of the street, and cut off the chance of their escape as soon as they had landed.

But the brave animal quickly recovered herself, and, though doubly weighted, breasted the rushing stream so gallantly that ere long she had struck bottom; then, gathering her feet well under her, she made one desperate leap to the precipitous bank, and, with a mighty shake, sped with long, swinging steps across the gardens of some villagers' cottages, leaping the enclosures as if they had been nothing, and spreading panic behind her.

Glancing quickly back at the mob he had so daringly deprived of their victim, Hereward saw the lady's horse rushing wildly hither and thither among the crowd, evidently blind with rage and fear, and doing no small damage with his trampling feet, ere he darted out of the throng, followed by a crowd of whooping urchins, and galloped up the village streets, across the bridge, and away like a bird into the country beyond.

Hereward was now quite out of the reach of his baffled pursuers, and, for the present, comparatively safe.

What should he do with his charming burden? Now that he had time to think, the youth who before had shown such bravery and presence of mind felt strangely abashed by the novelty of his situation.

Here was a wondrously lovely lady, of evident birth and station, thrown solely upon his protection, and clinging to him with the most touching terror.

Now that the moment of imminent danger had past she seemed bereft of all strength, and her trembling form leaned cupingly against his gently encircling arm, while torrents of tears rolled down her lovely cheeks from her closed eyes.

"Do not be terrified, lady," said young Hereward, with a trembling and a strange look of half-shy, half-passionate admiration at so delicate a human being. "We are a long way now from the village, and the rogues may yell as they like, for they can't trouble you more."

The lady shuddered from head to foot and hid her face in her hands, as if she would still shut out from her view the furious looks and menacing gestures of her savage assailants.

It was evident that she was too affrighted to speak; so Hereward, being quite unused to the emotions of such rare beings as she, thought perhaps she shuddered at the freedom of his touch, and withdrew somewhat from such close and charming proximity.

"If you will tell me, madam, whether I can take you so that you may be safe," he said, with humility, "I shall joyfully relinquish you to your friends, if you will but forgive the roughness of the mode I adopted for your deliverance."

The lady raised her tearful eyes, made a mute gesture towards the summit of the hill they were ascending, and bent her beautiful uncovered head again.

Hereward looked up the mountain side, and ejaculated, with sudden dismay:

"Kentigorne Tower!"

CHAPTER II.

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.

Macbeth.

WAS it possible that Baron de Chastelard counted among his household this tender being?

A rude storm of emotions assailed the young man. "She a Chastelard—oh, impossible!"

"Madame," said Hereward, in an altered tone, "do you wish me to carry you to the tower?"

"Yes," breathed she, with a sob. "I am Lucia de Chastelard."

Dark grew Hereward's brow, for his heart was filled with rage.

His gleaming eyes fastened themselves upon that hoary pile which loomed from the midst of mist wreathes on the summit of the crag they now were mounting, and an inarticulate sound escaped him.

The lady looked up with her diamond-bright eyes, and stared at the fierce expression which her deliverer wore.

He returned her gaze, and was immediately plunged into a sea of indecision, from which haughtily sought to escape; but vainly, for her face was so beautiful, her eyes so eloquent, her hair so long and bright and silken, that the charming lady filled his heart with indescribable rapture.

Her soft and pliant form leaned delicately across his arm; the enervating perfume of her sumptuous garments surrounded him as well as herself; the large, round tears rolled slowly over her pale cheeks.

What in the name of chivalry could Hereward do but tighten his clasp of lovely Lucia de Chastelard?

So frail, so white, so marvellous after the dark voluptuousness of the land he had left, she seemed to him as resistless as an angel from heaven, and as beautiful; and, dazzled, he went whither she directed, to the gates of Kentigern Tower.

A grim and forbidding-looking edifice was that tower, which but for Chastelard would never have been ruled save by a Kentigern. For generations no alien had set foot in Kentigern Tower, or ruled the valley down there; but Chastelard had changed all that.

There was a dry moat surrounding three sides of the vast wall, on the fourth the sea roared under a cliff three hundred feet in height. A crumbling portcullis spanned the moat opposite the gateway; and the gateway's broken arches threatened each intruder with instant destruction—so old and weather-worn and crumbling were they.

A huge iron-plated gate, studded with nail-heads as big and red as hazel-nuts, swung back as the horseman crossed the dilapidated bridge, and two weazel-faced, French-mannered servants peered at the strange spectacle of their dainty mistress in such a plight.

Through the yawning mouth of the gateway, with its jagged teeth of decayed masonry, Hereward could see the tower.

It was an immense structure, built in the form of a cross, with a round tower in the midst, the sides of which were pierced with port-holes three rows deep, and the black barrels of which reached the clouds.

Of the four arms of the cross one was the habitable part for the family; one was the servants' quarters; one had fallen into decay; and one had been the chapel.

But the chapel was in process of being torn down; workmen's tools lay scattered about the trodden sward; heaps of stones and rubbish disfigured the court; and the oriel windows lay shattered amid the ruin, while the trailing hindweeds crept in and out the fretted work and twisted round, glimmering bits of stained glass which once cost fortunes.

Baron de Chastelard, a utilitarian, thought best to make use of old materials when he wanted to build yonder row of servants' huts under the wall, and the Kentigerns' Chapel, the dearly cherished relic of past days, went for it.

Hereward dismounted without the gate, and assisted the lady to the ground.

"I will now return to the village, *se adieu*," said he softly.

She stepped closer to him, her large eyes full of enchantment. She was just tall enough to be obliged to throw back her gold-bright head and look upward—adorable height!

Hereward gazed on the modest brow, the child-like eyes, the scarlet, dewy, parted lips, and, half-intoxicated, the youth bent nearer, then stepped back, shocked to think that he might have committed an impropriety.

With a dazzling blush Lucia de Chastelard shrank back too, and dropped her wondrous, curling, bronzy lashes over her rosy cheek.

She was perhaps amazed to find that her deliverer was but a youth—perhaps angered at his presumption. Was that it?

Hereward straightened his colossal frame and crested his imperial head, looking inexpressibly dignified.

Lucia de Chastelard threw him a second glance, incomprehensible but soul thrilling, and held out her small silver-white hand.

"You must not go," she said, breaking into a smile. "Come along; you must see my father."

At the last word he started and looked another way.

"Come, come," she repeated, imperiously; "you can't return to the village, you know you can't. They would murder you. Follow me."

"My servant," stammered Hereward, astounded as a boy of ten; "I have left him down there—he does not know whether I have gone—I must go, madam."

"Oh, poor fellow! but we will send for him. Don't be anxious," urged she, every moment seeming to wax more ravishing. "Come, my brave rescuer, you must not vex me by refusing to receive my father's thanks. Are you coming? Ah! can you resist my entreaty?"

Hereward was no hard, pleasure-worn man, with a score of such reminiscences to steel his heart.

Resist her? No! From the very first she saved him with her witchery, and led him whither she willed. He muttered a reluctant assent and followed her.

In a few seconds his horse had been led off by a groom, and he was walking through a long dusky corridor after Miss Chastelard. She led him up a narrow staircase, after that, and through a well-furnished ante-room, where three men in livery were

lounging, and, opening a heavy door, which swung noiselessly as a phantom, for all its massiveness, she ushered him into a great, gloomy chamber.

Here, at the head of a long, white-draped dining-table, sat an old man, who, with a goblet of rich and sparkling crystal, held aloft in his long, yellow hand, watched the glowing contents as he moved the goblet between him and the nearest window, through which the last expiring rays of day faintly glimmered.

Hereward, standing near the door enfolded in gray shadows, examined him eagerly as he rose, and, leaning his knuckles on either side of the table, stretched out his neck and sharply eyed the two intruders.

"Father," said Lucia de Chastelard, "I have brought you this gentleman that you may join me in thanking him for his gallant conduct. To him I am indebted for my life."

Baron de Chastelard only leaped farther over the silver-draped table and strained his eyes to see the stranger.

The baron's head was preternaturally small in proportion to his body, which was tall and attenuated, and his complete baldness gave him a malevolent rather than a venerable appearance.

His visage was long and narrow, clay-white, and masklike, and inspired one with distrust and surprise.

His eyelids were shrivelled, yet fell low over his mean and cold eyes like the membrane of a serpent's; his glance was sharp and observant, his peaked nose and chin almost concealed a harsh, pale mouth, and a long, flowing, yellowish beard descended over his rich black velvet attires, and endowed him with a singular and appalling air.

Such was the old man of the tower, shunned by the ignorant people of Kentigern with awe; abhorred for his cruelty and greed; and only rebelled against when his cowardly rule had become insupportable.

A violet beam from the West illumined the mask-like face of the baron as he waited for Hereward to advance, and increased to ghastliness, to repulsion; little wonder if the youth stood rooted to the spot unable to overcome his emotions.

For many months he had travelled incessantly; it was to gain this sight.

For a lifetime he had looked forward to crushing an adversary—it was this old man.

But to amaze and grieve the lady, the gentle daughter of a demon incarnate—oh, impossible! He choked down the scorn that he felt, and, stepping forward a pace, said, coolly:

"My name is Hereward; riding through the village I was fortunate enough to assist your daughter to escape from a band of rioters."

"What do you say—rioters? Who are they?" ejaculated the old man, in a horrible whisper, while his glimmering eyes glanced fearfully round; "where are they now, Lucia? Heaven above! are we in danger?"

He sank into his chair, and tremblingly swallowed his wine, while Miss de Chastelard hastened to reply.

"Oh, no, dear father, we are safe enough, surely, now we are in the tower; they are now dispersing, no doubt, since this kind young gentleman has baulked them of their victim. Father, I beg you to prevail upon Mr. Hereward to remain here to-night, for his life will be the forfeit if he ventures among those people again."

"Indeed I can't stay; you must excuse me!" cried Hereward, quickly.

The baron peered eagerly at him, trying to distinguish what manner of man had rendered such service to his daughter, but the shadows were murky where Hereward stood, and he purposely averted his face.

"Come, Mr. Hereward, be seated," said the baron, rising to offer him a chair, with all due courtesy. "Why should you leave the tower and brave those hounds? You don't know the Kentigern people—they are a pack of bloodthirsty, mischievous demons, sir; but I'll crush all that out of them!"

The gleam in his snake-like eyes was fiendish as he uttered these words, leaning back in his chair and combing his long, pale beard with his livid and hooked fingers.

"Ah, father! you haven't heard all yet," said Miss Chastelard, in a low and grieving voice. "Mr. Channing, the land-steward, does not tell you all that these unfortunate people are suffering. He has forgotten to apprise you that they are maddened with famine and unable to till for the sum he requires from them as rent for their houses—"

"Very interesting and touching, no doubt, my dear," said the baron, with a hateful sneer; "but how came you to learn so much about my tenants?"

"I rode down to the village this afternoon—"

"Mademoiselle, did I not warn you?" exclaimed the baron, coldly.

She cast her eyes upon the floor with a slight bow, but proceeded with firmness:

"I had heard so much of the people's misery and destitution from Cicely, my maid, that I determined to see for myself why they were so unhappy. I did not go unattended, father. I had my groom to protect me, and I hoped to be able to nerve them that I thought a Chastelard (my heart, how they hate us Chastelards!) sympathized with the miserable. I hoped also to learn the secret of their dissatisfaction, and to intercede with them for your lordship. But I arrived at an inappropriate moment—the men had struck work at the mills, in the workshops, and everywhere, and were collected in the streets denouncing Mr. Channing for putting some new tax upon them which they could never pay, and execrating your lordship for directing him to do so. Father, surely you know nothing of this injustice?"

"Ha! ha! ha! injustice!" shouted the baron, with a laugh like a hyena. "I'll teach the knaves to prate of injustice under their breath. I'll lash them into submission!"

"No, no, dear father. I pray that you will pardon them!" cried Miss Chastelard, becoming quite pale and clasping her hands together. "I am sure they would not complain if they had no cause. Only promise me that you will lift from them that last tax which has made them desperate; do, dear father!"

Her tears, her tenderness, and her beauty thrilled Hereward to the heart, but the old man only shrugged his shoulders, and said, impatiently:

"Proceed with your narrative, Lucia. Tell us your reward for putting your fingers into the fire."

"While I was speaking to Mr. Jeffreys of the inn about these things," she resumed, gently, "a mob collected around me, and after knocking down my groom they dragged me away with them to the market-place, and some were for hiding me in a cave and keeping me as a hostage until you granted some of their demands, while others were for drowning me in the river. Ah! if it had not been for this kind-hearted young gentleman I should not have escaped a dreadful fate."

She shuddered, and gave Hereward a look of the deepest gratitude.

"I owe you my profound thanks, Mr. Hereward," said the baron, quite unmoved by his daughter's tale. "You are a stranger to this quarter, aren't you?"

"I am," returned Hereward, tearing his fascinated eyes from Miss Chastelard's to fix them coldly on the far less pleasing visage of her father, "and I will intrude no longer on your privacy."

His strong, ringing tones seemed to make the old baron start every time he spoke, and he anxiously peered at him through the gathering gloom.

"If you will favour me by remaining here to-night," he said, blandly, "my daughter and I will do our best to entertain you."

"Impossible," said Hereward; "I can't stay."

"My dear sir, must I beg you to honour us?" persisted the baron, more earnestly.

"I have business in the village. My servant—"

"Your servant shall be sent for. To tell you the truth, your presence to-night would be a favour, for we have nothing but hirelings to protect us should my tenants attack the tower, as I fear they intend to do. They will halt at nothing—even murder their lawful lord and plunder his money."

"I had heard that the people of Kentigern were celebrated for their affection towards their barons," remarked Hereward, sarcastically.

"Is it possible that such a stranger should be so well versed in this old tower's history?" exclaimed the baron, almost bending double in his endeavours to distinguish the youth's features.

"Oh, yes! Although I have never before trodden these ancient apartments I have heard many a legend of Kentigern's Tower," retorted he; "among them the story of the last Baron Kentigern, who was loved by his people the best of them all."

"A ruffianly giant!" burst forth the baron, with the swart of a fiend. "It is well that his crimes put an end to him so early in his career, or Kentigern would have been ruined in a year."

Had the chamber not been so dark Baron de Chastelard would have been amazed at the blaze which shot from his guest's eyes at this, and the menacing frown on his haughty brow.

But Hereward bowed low and sarcastically, and kept silence.

"However, the family is extinct now," continued the old man, with cold satisfaction. "My daughter here owes the last drop of their blood that flows in mortal veins. Her mother was a Kentigern."

Again Hereward bowed, for he dared not trust himself to speak. He had heard part of the life of hapless Sybilla Kentigern, and the misery she endured at the hands of this bitter old man.

"She was the cousin of that Kentigern you speak of," resumed the baron, intent on detaining his unwilling guest for a few moments longer, "and she died long ago. I have no pleasant task to perform in

ruling these mutinous tenants, I assure you; they are a discontented, idle set, with the true venom of the race in them. The cliffs all around us are riddled with secret tunnels from one cave to another, in which they meet to hatch conspiracies and elude the vigilance of the spies I have always placed among them to hold them in check. To think of their rising in insurrection for a trifling increase of rent—well, well, we shall see who will be the better for the fracas."

"My dear father," cried the pitying voice of Lucia de Chastelard, "they say that it is your intention to force them to abandon their homes by demanding higher rents than they can pay, so that you can plant a colony of French smugglers in their houses who will give you anything you ask to keep their secret. Alas! will you not convince them that you are not capable of such injustice?"

At this moment Hereward, whose face was turned to one of the windows for an instant, caught sight of a spectacle which amazed almost as much as it irritated him.

(To be continued.)

THE MISTLETOE.

IN Miss Pratt's "Flowering Plants of Great Britain" we read that "It is from Pliny chiefly that we gather the little which is known of the use made by the Druids of the mistletoe. This ancient naturalist, in the words of his translator, Dr. Philemon Holland, says: 'Forasmuch as we are entred into a discourse touching misleto, I cannot overpass one strange thing thereof used in France. The Druids (for so they call their Divinours, Wise Men, and the State of their clergy) esteeme nothing in the world more sacred than misleto, and the tree whereon it breedeth, so it be on the oke. Now you must take this by the way. These priests or clergymen chose of purpose such groves for their Divine service as stood only upon okes; nay, they solemnise no sacrifice nor perform any sacred ceremonies without branches and leaves thereof, so that they may serve well enough to be named thereupon Dryades in Greece, which signifieth as much as the oke priests. Certes to say whatsoever they find growing upon that tree over and besides its own fruit, be it Mistletoe, or anything else, they esteeme it as a gift sent from Heaven, as a sure signe that the God whom they serve giveth them to understand that he hath chosen that particular tree. And no marvelle, for in verie deed Mistleto is passing season (scarce) and hard to be found upon the oke.'" He adds, "when found it is fetched with great ceremony, and by all means on the sixth day of the moon."

The few instances of the occurrence of mistletoe upon the oak in England have been carefully noted. A remarkable one in the grounds of the Hag, in Derbyshire, is thus mentioned in one of the Colepepper MSS. in the British Museum: "Hearo my Lord Frescheville did live, and here growes the famous misletoe tree, the only oake in England that beare misletoe." Some years since, however, the Society of Arts offered a prize for a specimen of oak mistletoe, and received one from Gloucestershire. A fine one has been seen in Anglesey, in the park of Lord Uxbridge, hanging over a huge Druidical cromlech; and a few others have also been found.

Two years since a writer in *Notes and Queries* gave the following interesting information on the same subject: "A few years ago some antiquaries of Besançon employed some rural genadarnes to search for oak mistletoe. After a search extending over several months, one specimen was procured, and deposited in the Museum of Grey. Another specimen was found subsequently, and sent to the Museum of Nancy. . . . The finders were rewarded with forty francs. In Switzerland the mistletoe generally prefers the highest branches of the highest trees. It is rarely within reach. In a forest it usually chooses the trees that most abound. It loves the *Pinus sylvestris*, but, if limes are more abundant, it neglects the pine. Strange, mysterious plant!"

In the south of England mistletoe is very common, especially in the cider counties. The plant has been seen on thirty-eight different kinds of trees in England; it grows abundantly in France and Switzerland, and is found in India and the Levant. It has been cut from the laburnum in Germany (where that tree is so prettily called *goldregen*, or golden rain), and also from old olive trees in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and in the neighbourhood of Nabulus, the ancient Sychar, "near to the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph." Its occurrence on "needle-leaved" trees, however, is rare.

The mistletoe is not limited to the Eastern hemisphere. It abounds in the southern forests of the United States, and grows most luxuriantly on the trees near water-courses. Some deciduous trees have been observed there to be almost as green in winter as when clothed with their own foliage in

summer, in consequence of the quantity of this parasite growing upon them.

The propagation of this curious plant was for a long time believed to be effected by birds. It has been noticed that, when the berries are stripped from other trees and shrubs, those of the mistletoe have remained untouched; and it has hence been conjectured that birds do not feed upon them unless pressed by hunger. From the glutinous nature of the pulp (from which birdlime is sometimes made) the seeds adhere to the beaks of the birds; and it is asserted that, to clear this off, they rub their beaks on the rough bark, and so insert the seed. Yet, on the other hand, it is alleged that the mistletoe berries form the favourite food of the mistle thrush.

SCIENCE.

THE BALTIC SEA.—Some careful soundings of the Baltic have been made by the steamship "Pomerania." The greatest depth of the Baltic Sea between Gothland and Windau was found to be 720 feet. At the depth of from 600 feet to 720 feet the water was, at the end of July, very cold, the thermometer giving from one-half to two degrees Réaumur (near the freezing-point of Fahrenheit). No plants were found at this depth, and only a few specimens of one or two species of worms were brought up with the clay and mud.

ELECTRIC PYROMETER.—A most ingenious and valuable application of the known fact that the resistance of metals to the galvanic current increases directly as the temperature has lately been devised in Germany. The resistance of a platinum wire having been determined, a cylinder of clay is surrounded with such wire and covered with a tube of the same earth. The coil is connected with a two-cell Daniell's battery, and also with an indicator for the determination of the resistance, and subjected to the heat of which a test is required. Such an instrument would be valuable in temperatures at which mercury would evaporate and glass melt.

EXPERIMENTS WITH GUNPOWDER.—Experiments on gunpowder still claim the attention of artillerymen in foreign countries as well as in our own. The Prussians have recently made an attempt to manufacture pebble powder, without success. They complain of it as too *brisant*, and have fallen back upon prismatic. The Russians have finally adopted the latter powder, and are manufacturing it in large quantities at the government mills of Oka. The Swedes, Danes, and Dutch have only a limited number of heavy guns, for which they will probably introduce prismatic powder. On the other hand, the Italians, Turks, Egyptians, and French, will in all probability adopt some form of pebble. The Spaniards are particularly in want of a slow-burning explosive, their gunpowder, corresponding to our R.L.G., being extremely violent and "brutal" in its action. We understand that Spain has lately been supplied for experimental purposes with some English-made pebble. The Americans were the originators of prismatic powder; but they seem to have altogether abandoned this form in favour of large-grained powder of a similar class to pebble. The chief disadvantages of prismatic powder are the labour it entails of building up each cartridge and the want of uniformity in the hardness of the outer crust or skin of the prism. The latter is a manufacturing difficulty, mainly depending on the amount of moisture contained in the powder when it goes into the mould, and may seriously affect its behaviour in large charges. We have adopted, says the *Globe*, pebble powder provisionally, and our future experiments with this powder will probably bear on the questions of cheapening manufacture, giving regularity to the grain, and ascertaining what would be the effect of varying the chemical composition, particularly as regards the charcoal.

HALF THE COST OF STEAM-POWER SAVED.—A series of experiments, which have recently tried, proves that half the fuel now consumed in the production of steam-power can be saved by using the heat that escapes in the exhaust steam from an engine to produce additional power. In the experiments tried the exhaust from the 20-horse engine (that drove the shafting in the shop where the trial was made) was used, and the heat which this exhaust steam contained was sufficient to drive another 20-horse engine, with the mill to which it was attached, developing as much power as the engine whose exhaust was used. The apparatus with which these surprising results were produced is very simple, and can be attached to any engine now in use. It consists of a plain tubular boiler, 10 feet long and 26 inches in diameter, with seventy 1½-inch iron flues in it. This boiler was filled with the bisulphide of carbon, and set in an upright position. The exhaust steam was passed through the flues, entering at the top end, and passing out into the atmosphere at the bottom, and was perfectly condensed in the flues, imparting its latent heat to the fluid in the boiler, which was rapidly converted into vapour to

a pressure of 50 lbs. to the inch. This vapour was used to work an engine in place of steam, and was condensed by cooling after being used, pumped back into the boiler, and used again continuously. Only 40 gallons of the bisulphide of carbon were required to fill the boiler and work the engine constantly, and the amount of fluid lost did not exceed half a gallon per day. The engine used to work the vapour in was of 12-inch bore and 24-inch stroke, and ran at 50 revolutions per minute. The steam-engine from which the exhaust was used was 10-inch bore and 24-inch stroke, and ran at 60 revolutions per minute. The temperature of the condensed water discharged from the flues of the bisulphide boiler did not exceed 116 deg. Fahr. at any of the trials made.

MERCURY.—A very important paper has been communicated to the Academy of Sciences by M. Merget, on the diffusion of mercurial vapours. The only researches extant on this subject are those of Faraday, which are nearly half a century old, and which his immense and well-merited fame have hitherto allowed to pass unchallenged. Since then, however, various discoveries have been made, which, had they existed at the time he made his experiments, would have materially modified his results, which may be stated thus: 1. The phenomenon of the vaporization of mercury is not continuous, and ceases absolutely at a temperature of seven degrees below freezing-point. 2. At temperatures above this limit the vapours emitted remain quite close to the generating surface, forming a stratum of an inch or two at the ordinary temperature. Now, these statements are in contradiction to the formula expressing the maximum tensions of the emanations of perfect liquids, and also to the ideas now generally admitted with regard to elastic fluids. A gas or vapour is at present considered composed of particles that move in every direction with average velocities depending on its nature and temperature. Hence Faraday's experiments appeared to M. Merget of a nature to require reconsideration; and, as the former had employed gold leaf for his test, the latter preferred the saline solutions of the precious metals as much more sensitive. When nitrate of silver or chloride of gold, platinum, palladium, or iridium are applied in solution on sheets of paper, with the addition of hygroscopic substances in order to prevent their desiccation, mercurial vapours will reduce the metal according to Richter's laws. If a sheet, therefore, be streaked with a solution of ammoniacal nitrate of silver, the mercurial emanations will be easily revealed. This test being inconvenient for long experiments on account of its sensitiveness to light, it may be replaced by the chlorides of palladium and platinum; and thus it may be easily ascertained that, contrary to Faraday's views, the vaporization of mercury is a continuous phenomenon, which takes place even when the metal is frozen, and that its emanations possess a considerable diffusive power, in accordance with the usual laws of gaseous substances.

FRITTERED AWAY.

ANOTHER year has gone, and many of the resolutions formed at its beginning still remain unexecuted. For such omissions it is too much the habit with us all to excuse ourselves on the plea of a want of time; whereas, in truth, this is seldom a good and sufficient ground of justification.

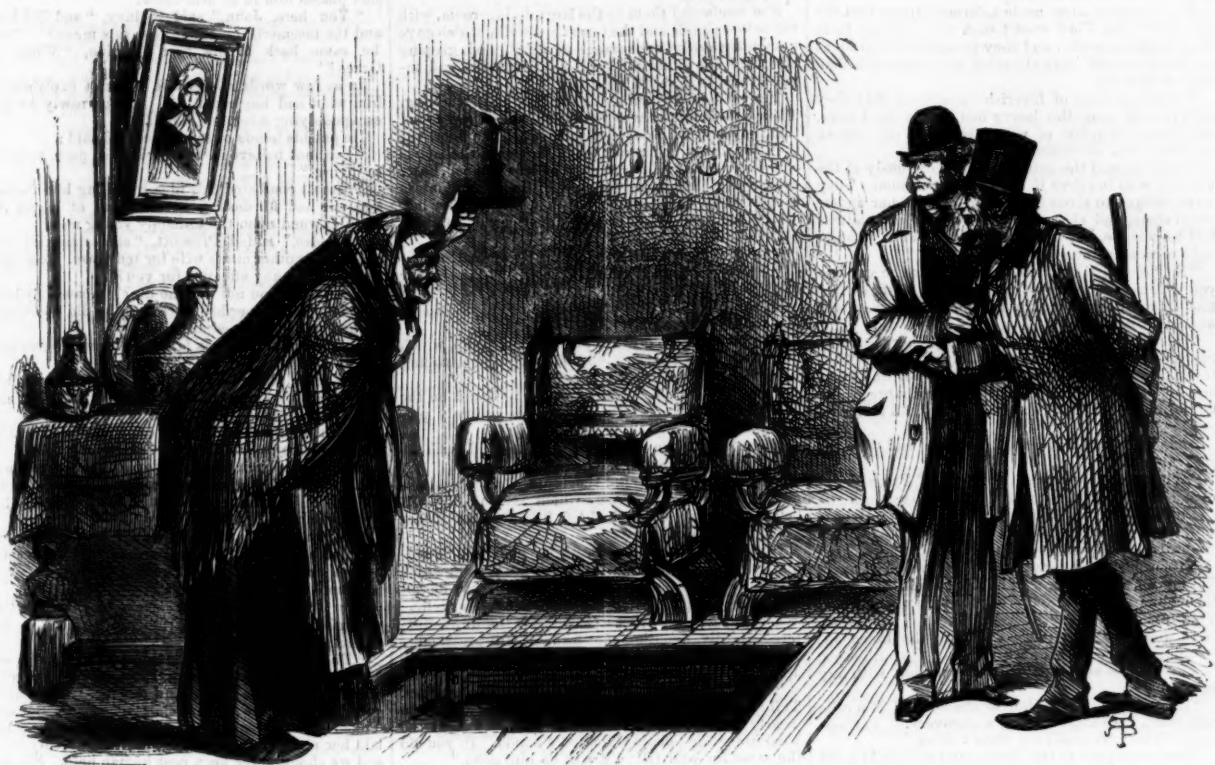
Nothing is easier than to fritter away time in matters of no use to ourselves or to any one else. The habit is so readily formed. It grows upon one unawares.

Keep a strict account of every hour of your own time for a single week, setting down correctly the exact manner in which every hour is spent, and see whether, when you come to review the record, you do not find it full of admonition and instruction.

In this simple way one can readily understand the secret of his want of time. He will discover that he has given hours and hours to idle talk, to indolence, and to unconsidered trifles, which have yielded him neither profit nor pleasure.

What is the remedy? Arrange your work in the order of its comparative importance. Attend first to the things which are essential to be done, and let the unessentials take their chance afterwards. The difference in the amount of work accomplished will be astonishing. Duty before pleasure. Those who practise this precept have plenty of time for pleasure, and enjoy far greater satisfaction than those who reverse the rule.

REWARD OF MERIT.—We hear that the English bankers have presented the Marquis de Ploëne with a beautiful piece of old English silver engraved with his arms, and the inscription, "From his English friends," as a recognition of his services during the reign of the Commune. The Marquis de Ploëne is the head of the French Bank at Paris, and our readers will doubtless remember that at the time of the Communist riots it was he who so bravely defended the Bank of France.



THE THREE PASSIONS.

BY THE

Author of "Sweet Eglantine," "Evander," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVII.

If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow, and which will not,
Speak then to me. *Shakespeare.*

WHILE everything promised so well for the success of the enterprise upon which Grace Ives had set her heart, Chickton's absence and prolonged silence were beginning to excite alarm in the breasts of his friends in town.

He had promised to write or telegraph to them every day, to give them news of his arrival and progress, but they had simply had one letter from him dated from Deal, saying that he was safe, in good health, and hoped to send them important intelligence before long.

On the morning of the third day Marville, who was much interested in Chickton's enterprise, called at the hotel. He justly regarded him as his benefactor, for he had, by a timely gift of money, placed him in comparatively easy circumstances.

Chowdar and Prescott were together near the window of the sitting-room, and Amine was reclining on her favourite divan, playing with some amber beads. Her face was troubled, and it was evident that, though she was excluded from the councils of her friends, she knew that her mind and theirs were occupied with the same subject, and that was the safety of Chickton.

The presence of Marville was hailed with delight by Prescott, who exclaimed:

"Come this way; we have been talking of you. It is clear that something has happened to both my poor friend Sydney and to Mr. Chickton, who so nobly went after him. We are not inclined to allow them to remain without assistance, but we want you to call your art—"

"Pardon me—science!" interrupted Marville, who was an enthusiast in his craft, which too many regarded as the trade of an empiric.

"Certainly; I meant to say your scientific knowledge. We think that Amine can tell us if Mr. Chickton is in danger, and where he is. After his long silence it would not be proper for us to remain idle. We have heard his opinion of the woman he has to contend against, and we know the nature of the treasure for which she is plotting. Perhaps my knowledge of the world is more theoretical than practical, and your experience is wider than mine, but I fear that my friend and Mr. Chickton are in danger."

[THE SECRET TRAP.]

"There can be no doubt of it," answered Marville.

"Will you place Amine under the influence of mesmerism, and see if we can elicit any information from her?"

"By all means. If there should be an adverse current of magnetism in the air—which sometimes exists—we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we did our best."

"Even if you fail I have determined to go to Sea View, and explore its mysteries, if it has any," said Prescott.

Amine glided up to the professor's side. "You were talking of me," she said, looking up into his face with her soft, gazelle-like eyes.

"Yes, my dear," he answered, trying, considerably, so to frame his reply as not to alarm her. "We want to send you to sleep—may we do so? You will not suffer any pain; it will be just as simple as it was before."

"Do with me whatever you like, if it will help my dear papa," she replied. "I do not mind what I go through for him."

"I do not know that he is in danger, but, as we have not heard from him, we want to find out if he requires our assistance. Will you kindly lean back on your cushions?" exclaimed Marville.

Amine went, with the docility of a little dog, to her divan, and sat down, throwing herself back. Marville stood over her, and, waving his hands as he had done on a former occasion, exclaimed:

"Sleep—I will it!"

Her eyes closed, and she obeyed the superior will of this strange man who exercised such an absolute influence over her.

"Follow the man you call your father," he continued; "where is he now, and what has he been doing since we last saw him?"

There was a pause, lasting nearly a minute.

Chowdar and Prescott watched what was going on from the embrasure of the window in which they were standing.

"He is at a railway station," said Amine, at length.

"He gets into the train, which takes him to a seaside place. I see ships, and people dressed as sailors. He changes his dress, and becomes like one of them. He walks along the road till he comes to an old house, standing by itself, on the cliffs. He enters the yard by getting over a wall, and, after fastening a rope which he has brought with him to a projecting ledge on the terrace, he throws it down. He is seen by a man, who tells a woman; she comes and fires at him; he is hurt."

"They have killed him!" exclaimed Chowdar,

whose love for his master was well expressed at that moment by the concern displayed upon his countenance.

"Hush!" said Marville, holding up his hand to enjoin silence.

"He is not deeply injured," continued Amine, "for he descends by the rope, swims through the sea at the bottom of the rocks, and goes to an inn. It is night again, and he is a second time on the terrace. The woman comes out as before. He seizes her by the throat, and she begs for her life. They talk together."

"What do they say?" demanded the mesmerist.

"I cannot hear."

"Listen attentively!" the magnetizer exclaimed, in an imperious voice.

"The wind howls so I cannot hear," answered Amine, in a plaintive tone: "but they go together into the house, and suddenly disappear."

"Disappear?" echoed Marville.

"Yes; I cannot see them—stay!—I see them again!—they are in a sort of cavern. There is a third person there—a young man, stretched on a bed; he resembles one dead. He is fair—almost like a woman. His face is very pale and still."

She paused, and breathed heavily.

In vain Marville urged her to continue; he could extract nothing more from her. The extraordinary effort of mental sight which she had exhibited had entirely ceased, for that occasion, at least, and she was incapable of farther trial.

"She is exhausted; let her sleep," said the professor, who waved his hands over her.

The anxious look vanished from her face, and she fell into a placid slumber.

"The young man she has described must be Sydney," said Prescott. "Some foul play has been attempted, or is in progress. We should be cowards were we to remain here idle."

"What do you propose?" asked Marville.

"I do not know what your engagements are," answered Prescott, "but, if you feel yourself at liberty, I shall ask you to accompany me to this house by the seaside, and aid me to rescue our friends."

"If I had business of a most lucrative kind to keep me in town I would cheerfully abandon it," said the mesmerist, "for I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Chickton. Let us set out as soon as possible. We shall arrive in a few hours, and, under the friendly shelter of night, we may do much."

"Very well," rejoined Prescott, who was full of energy now that his friend required his services. "Chowdar will remain here to guard Amine, and you and I will go at once to render Sydney and Mr. Chickton what assistance we can."

Their preparations were soon made, and they arrived at Deal in the evening.

The inquiries they made informed them that the distance to Sea View was not such as to prevent them from walking, easily, and they proceeded to do so, as a carriage would have attracted more attention than they wished for.

It was in a state of feverish impatience that they arrived, and rang the heavy bell at the yard gate, the dismal clangour of which the deaf old woman in charge was accustomed to.

Madge opened the gate, and stared curiously at the visitors, who inquired if any one was at home. They were obliged to shout in her ear to make her understand them, and she made answer that her mistress had been there, but had gone away, and she was the only person on the premises.

"So," she added, "if you have come to see any one you will have to go away again. The mistress is a fine lady, who lives up in London, where you will find her, I daresay."

Prescott endeavoured to explain to her that they had grave fears respecting the safety of two friends of theirs, but the old woman shook her head. She knew nothing of any friends. She was left in charge of the house, and could admit no one. They had better go away.

And she would have shut the gate had they not prevented her.

"We are going to search the house!" Prescott exclaimed. "You can come wish us or stay here, as you like. Our duty to our friends is clear. Here is half a sovereign for you. Give us every facility for our search, and you shall have as much more."

Madge did not hesitate when she saw the gold. Taking up some keys, she hobbled across the yard, then entered the house, going through every room. They explored the terrace, or platform, which we have described, and made a visit to the basement, examining the cellars, and, after that, the outhouses, but, as may be supposed, without meeting with any success.

"If we could find a plan of the house," Marvelle suggested, "we might make a discovery. Perhaps in the library we shall see such a thing."

They went back to the library, and searched on the shelves and in drawers, but no plan was to be discovered.

"Amine said something about an underground chamber!" exclaimed Prescott, reflectively. "We must examine the walls and the flooring with hammers. If we meet with a hollow sound we shall know what to do."

With a little trouble a hammer and a bar of iron were found in the yard, and Prescott armed himself with the former, Marvelle taking the latter.

These preparations frightened the old woman, who, until reassured, fancied her life was in danger, and that the two men were nothing better than bold and daring thieves, who meant to rife the house, relying upon its deserted condition and isolated position to escape without detection.

She fell on her knees, and clasped her hands, begging them not to hurt her, saying she was "a poor, lone woman," and would not hinder them from doing what they liked.

"I am old," she said, "but I love my life. I was born here, and want to die peacefully. I've no kith nor kin in the place, only a son, who is at sea, and I want to see him again before I die."

Marvelle assured her that they meant her no harm, and he took the trouble to explain to her again the object of their visit. An intelligent look came over her face at his explanation. She remembered a young man coming with Mrs. Ives and Ellis, and she had not seen him go.

This look was followed by one expressive of avarice, and she said:

"I know more about this place, sir, than most people. I have not lived here—girl and woman—nigh upon seventy years for nothing, and if the young gentlemen has been brought here for foul purposes I think I can tell you where to find him."

"Speak at once then, and save us farther trouble," cried Marvelle; "if you are in league with your mistress we will pardon you on the understanding that you do all in your power to make amends."

"I know nothing," she answered. "But I will show you an underground chamber if you will pay me."

"What do you want? Name your price, and you shall have it," answered Marvelle, who had money about him which Chickton had lent him.

Producing the half-sovereign which had been given her, she said:

"Fill my hands with three."

He took out a handful of gold, which he gave her, much to her delight, for she crooned over it in a half-imbecile fashion, like a child with a new and glittering plaything.

"Come this way," she exclaimed, placing the money

in her pocket. "You shall have all the assistance I can render you."

She conducted them to the large dining-room, with the oaken panels and the tapestried walls, which gave it such a ghostly appearance at night, and, groping about till she found the knob, she pressed it, and invited them to descend with her.

They did so, not without some fear and trembling. Their astonishment was profound when they found themselves rapidly descending through the floor, but their joy knew no bounds when they saw the bodies of their friends. Their exultation was damped, however, when they perceived how still and motionless they were, for they were afraid that, though they had discovered them, they would never speak to them again.

The air was so close as to be nearly stifling. "They are here," cried Prescott, "but whether dead or alive I cannot tell. At all events, let us have them out of this. The atmosphere of this villainous place would kill a cat."

The bodies were quickly placed on the trap, which ascended when Madge found the spring controlling its upward action.

Prescott's first act was to place his hand on the heart of his friend. Its action was scarcely perceptible.

Marvelle did the same to Chickton, and with no more reassuring result.

Casting his eyes round the room, Prescott saw a muff made of awnedsdown, which lay on a sofa; it belonged to Grace, who had left it behind her in her guilty haste to get away.

He got up from his knees, for he had been kneeling by Sydney's side, and ran to the muff, from which he plucked some down, a small piece of which he put on Sydney's lips, tossing the rest over to Marvelle.

The experiment was successful, for the down fluttered slightly, denoting that Sydney still breathed.

"He is alive!" exclaimed Prescott, springing up again. "How do you find Chickton?"

"The buff flutters a little, so I suppose he breathes. Tell the old woman to bring some lights. It is so nearly dark that I cannot see clearly, and open the windows while I chafe Chickton's hands. If you do the same for your friend it will do him good."

Lights were brought, and a current of fresh air played upon the faces of the insensible men, who were further stimulated to recovery by the judicious administration of brandy.

It was fully an hour, however, before they showed signs of life, then they were so weak and ill that they could scarcely speak.

"I should not have believed such infamy possible," exclaimed Prescott, alluding to the attempt to murder their friends.

"You have told me your friend's story," answered Marvelle, "and when hundreds of thousands of pounds are involved I can believe anything."

"But in the nineteenth century—in this age of civilization—fancy two men being treated in this manner!"

"It is strange, I grant you," answered Marvelle, with a shrug of the shoulders; "but the way in which we have, under Providence, been the means of rescuing them is still more remarkable. Had it not been for clairvoyance we should have known nothing."

"I admit that we are much indebted to your art," said Prescott, "and I am also inclined to say that the greater our civilization the more refinement we discover in wickedness. As Dr. Quincey looked upon murder as one of the fine arts, I consider that the terrible woman we have to cope with has reduced this atrocious crime to a science."

"No doubt of it, and I will say this, the greater the intelligence of the person who commits a crime the less chance is there of its discovery. Why is it that we so seldom see a person of education arraigned for a heinous offence, and that our calendars are generally filled with the names of those who have not had the same advantages as these above them? Simply because they are less clever and make blunders. I hold that the upper crust of society is infinitely more corrupt in reality than that beneath it."

Prescott was about to reply, when Sydney, who had slept off his soporific, came to himself, and looked wildly about him.

"Grace, Grace!" he muttered.

"She is not here. She has gone away after leaving you to die like a dog in a ditch," rejoined Prescott, whose indignation against his friend's betrayer would break out, in spite of his efforts to control it.

"Who are you?" asked Sydney, faintly, as he turned his lack-lustre eyes upon him.

"Do you not know me—your friend—John Prescott? Come, Sydney, pull yourself together, and try and realize where you are and what has happened," cried the artist, in a good-natured tone.

Sydney allowed a little more brandy to be poured down his throat, and he sat up.

Chickton was also recovering, and his attendant had placed him in an arm-chair.

"You here, John," said Sydney, "and Chickton and the mesmerist? What does this mean?" Then he came back to his first question, "Where is Grace?"

In a few words as possible Prescott explained to him what had happened, and how narrowly he had escaped dying a terrible death.

He put his hands over his face and said:

"I cannot believe it. She seemed so pure, so good, so loving."

Prescott combated this idea by telling him the motive she had for destroying him, and at length the truth dawned upon the unhappy young man.

"Besides," added Prescott, "she is married, and has been another man's wife for ten years. How could she entertain any affection for you?"

"Why did you not let me die?" moaned Sydney, who felt Grace's perfidy more than he did the danger he had so narrowly escaped.

To know that she was false to him was worse than death.

Marvelle, seeing that both Chickton and Sydney were faint from want of food, assisted the old woman to kill some fowls, which were promptly cooked. A few bottles of wine from the cellars helped to make a supper from which they derived great benefit.

Chickton felt a wild, fierce joy at being saved in so extraordinary a manner, and revelled in the expectation of foiling Grace a second time when she felt secure.

Sydney now heard many things of which he had hitherto been ignorant; his parentage was explained to him, and he learned that he was the heir to a vast fortune.

The intelligence did not seem to give him that pleasure, satisfaction, and pride which Chickton had expected.

"The ten years expire to-morrow," Chickton exclaimed, as he leant back on the sofa cushions after dinner, for he was yet ill and weak. "To-morrow you can claim the fortune left to you by Solomon Tulse. We are only just in time. Grace Elbury had laid her plans well; another four-and-twenty hours and we should have been past human help. She and her husband would have had the money, and my mission would have been unaccomplished. That which I promised to the father to do for his son I shall now be able to perform for the grandson."

"Come," said Prescott, "let us drink to Sydney's health. He will take the name of Tulse, of course, and be a great man, and probably refuse to know poor fellows like us."

Sydney pressed his friend's hand as if to deny this part of his statement.

"Your very good health," cried Chickton, whose spirits began to revive. "I wish you every sort of prosperity, though I should be glad to see you brighten a little. All danger is past now. Are you in pain?"

"Yes," rejoined Sydney, shortly.

"Where? Can we do anything for you? A doctor—"

Sydney pressed his hand to his side.

"It is here," he answered, with a sad smile; "my heart pains me, not my body."

A grave look came over Chickton's face. If this remark implied that he still loved Grace, in spite of her treachery and wickedness, he saw fresh complications before him.

Pretending not to understand his meaning, which, however was transparent enough, he turned the conversation into other channels.

"We must be away from here early to-morrow," he exclaimed, "for there is much to be done. Grace has the orders upon which the company have promised to pay, for I was robbed in the underground chamber, and it will require all my influence and your presence to prevent her obtaining the money."

"Cannot you leave me here?" said Sydney.

"Here! Impossible! You must come with us. Your apathy is wonderful when it is considered how your prospects have improved, and what a brilliant future you have before you. But you are ill and weak. Let us sleep as well as we can in our chairs for a few hours, in order to be ready to start with the lark in the morning."

"Ah!" said Sydney to himself, with a profound sigh, "they do not know how I love that woman."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Oh: Wretched woman, Whom guilt hath flung at a dependent's feet, Rise, rise! How canst thou keep thy fatal secret? Those fixed and bloodshot eyes, those wringing hands—

Yes: And were I fastidious, inert, and marble, The accuser here would speak. Old Play.

SYDNEY was of an impressionable age, when the very name of a loved one mentioned in one's presence, the rustle of her dress, a flower she has worn in her

boom, will bring the hot, tell-tale blood rushing to the face.

What matters it to a man in love what the character or antecedents are of the woman who has bewitched him? He does not care to think what her relations are, and if he picks her up out of the mire he thinks just as much of this treasure as he carries her away as if she was a duchess.

He slept little that night. Grace's form would ever rise up before him; he saw her large, lustrous eyes, which had the power to pierce right through into his heart, and he beheld her classic features, her red, pouting lips, which had kissed him after telling him that he was all the world to her.

Could it be possible that this splendid creature was after all little better than a magnificent figure to toy with whom was to incur a mortal death, whose touch was leprous, whose every word was false, whose look was a falsehood?

If so, the world was worse by far than he had supposed it, and his young heart sank within him as he thought of all the wickedness that he could not reveal. If the world was so bad and so hollow he did not wish to live in it.

What was the use of the wealth that Chickton was going to bring him if his life was blighted and he could not enjoy it?

"Oh," he moaned as he tossed feverishly on the couch, while his friends slumbered around him, "that I had never seen this false, false woman. Oh, that my grandfather had not left me the money, for I could have struggled on in my poverty, yet derived pleasure from this fair world, which I once thought so smiling and so full of happiness."

It is hard to be very heart sick and tired of life at one-and-twenty, as he was. It is hard to turn one's face to the sky and find the stars fall of promise of a happiness never, never to be realized here below, and it is harder still to sigh—oh, so longingly!—for the rest which is shadowed out in the far-off glitter of those astral homes.

The next day they were up early. Some more fowls died a sudden death, and were placed on the gridiron. The party reached the station in time for the first train, all in good spirits except Sydney, who continued depressed and almost silent.

Chickton placed himself by his side, and took him under his protection, striving all he could to banish care from his mind and cheer him with the prospect of the immense wealth which he would inherit.

"You will not harm her?" said Sydney, meaning Grace.

Chickton divined his meaning, and replied: "She deserves to end her days in a prison. I will tell you her history."

For more than half an hour Sydney listened to the tale of guilt and conspiracy. He heard of Walter Tottenham and shuddered at his fate. He trembled afresh as he thought of the danger he had passed through, yet, like a moth lying with stinged wings, he could not help turning his admiring gaze upon the bright flame which had worked the mischief.

"She is too beautiful to languish in a jail," said Sydney, at length. "For my sake you must not harm her."

"If you desire it I will say nothing," rejoined Chickton, who was displeased at his failure to produce any effect upon his listener. "Perhaps she will be punished enough by the miscarriage of her dearly cherished plans. She is poor, and her poverty may impel her to commit other crimes for the commission of which she will not escape punishment so easily."

On arriving at the terminus Chickton hired a cab and drove to the office of the company, where Chickton was informed that the secretary was engaged.

"Take my card in, if you please. It is of the utmost moment," answered Chickton, looking at the clock, which marked half-past eleven.

As the office opened at ten he surmised that Grace and her husband might have been there an hour and a half. This was a long time, but its very length proved that the secretary was suspicious and had endeavored to throw some obstacle in their way.

In a few minutes the same tall, gentlemanly man we have described on a former occasion came out of his private room, carefully shutting the door after him. He was a little older in appearance, and perhaps more red-tape-like-looking and precise, as if with increasing age. The rigidity inseparable from official life had grown upon him.

"I think," said the secretary, "that you are the Mr. Chickton who called on me ten years ago with Mr. Tulse's letter?"

"I am, sir," replied Chickton.

"Are you here to-day to prefer a claim?"

"I have brought the grandson of Mr. Solomon Tulse with me, his father being dead."

"Indeed! Then it is lucky that I have been as particular as I have," the secretary rejoined; "for Mr. and Mrs. Ives have been with me since the office opened. This is the day appointed by Mr. Tulse, as

you are aware, for the actual payment of the money left by him, and they came duly prepared, with the orders in duplicate. I presume they are—can I say forged?"

"Certainly not, they are the real orders. There is no forgery about them," replied Chickton.

"Really there is something extraordinary about this I am sure, and as I should not like to see a great wrong accomplished will you step aside with me, out of the hearing of those in the office, and explain what is obscure?"

"Certainly."

"Will—Mr. Tulse I presume," the secretary continued, looking at Sydney, who bowed, as he had been told that would be his future name—"will Mr. Tulse favour us with his company also?"

They retired into a room which was generally used by the directors when they held a board meeting, and, closing the door, the secretary said:

"Now, Mr. Chickton, what is the meaning of all this? I have the utmost confidence in you, but I must confess that I am bewildered."

Chickton related circumstantially what had happened since his arrival in London, and the secretary listened somewhat indifferently. At first, but Chickton's narrative bore the impress of truth, and as he proceeded conviction came to his hearer.

"This is bad," he said, "and I do not see how I can aid you. It is not my place to side with you, or against the other parties."

"You will not see justice defeated?"

"Not if I can prevent it, and as I am a much older man than yourself you will I hope forgive me for giving you some advice."

"I shall only be too thankful, if—"

"Very well; listen to me," interrupted the secretary. "Your appearance with your companions will have a terrifying effect upon Mrs. Ives, and there is no doubt that you can call the police to your aid, if you apply for a warrant and state your case, for a greater outrage than that you have been subjected to was probably never perpetrated. As the orders given by Mr. Solomon Tulse are presented to me I must consent to pay upon them, and I will request Mr. and Mrs. Ives to come into this room to receive the money. You will appear like avenging spirits, and I will do what I can to assist you in frightening the woman. If she be obstinate, the police must be summoned, and although you cannot arrest her without a warrant the charge and the disturbance will be sufficient for me to refuse to settle the matter, and I will say that tomorrow I will entertain the application again, for I thoroughly believe your story, remarkable as it is, and look upon Mrs. Ives as a most depraved and abandoned woman."

Turning to Sydney, he added:

"I hope, Mr. Tulse, that in a short time there will be no impediment to your enjoyment of the fortune which we have so long held in trust for you."

Sydney thanked him in the languid manner which had now become habitual to him, and seemed to take little interest in his prospect of becoming a rich man. His eyes were turned every now and then towards the door at which he might expect Grace to enter, and his manner was nervous and fidgety.

"You are acting in a way which would gain the approval of the whole world if the facts were known," exclaimed Chickton; "and I beg on behalf of my friend and myself to thank you heartily."

"Stay here, if you please, until I return," said the secretary, "and, if you can manage it, get a Rile into the shadow."

They retired to the left of the door, where they would not be easily seen, and waited for what was to take place.

Frederick and Marvell were in the outer office, and did not know what was going on, though they were able to make a shrewd guess.

"Be brave," said Chickton, in a whisper to Sydney. "This woman is a fiend. Drive her from your heart."

Sydney shook his head sadly.

"I love her still," he answered.

Chickton gnashed his teeth with rage.

No doubt he would have made some energetic reply had not the door opened.

Grace preceded her husband, who was followed by the secretary.

She was radiant with smiles. Her cause, as she imagined, had triumphed, and there was nothing to damp her joy. Her enemies were dead and dying, and though her heart might tremble a little as she thought of Sea View and its peopled dungeon the prospect of laying hands on Solomon Tulse's hoard was too brilliant and alluring to allow any phantom doubts or reflections to disturb her serenity.

"How, will you have this money, madam?" exclaimed the secretary. "I address you because you have presented the orders, and taken the management of this business, though I should properly speak to your husband."

"What do I understand is the total amount?" she asked.

"Half a million of money, principal and accumulated interest."

"Let me have it in Bank of England notes," she said, "of a thousand pounds each. Give me, if you please, five hundred thousand-pound notes."

"Certainly, madam," replied the secretary. At the same time he coughed slightly as a signal to Chickton and Sydney, who advanced, the former exclaiming:

"Before this money is paid over I have a word to say."

Grace staggered back at seeing her two victims, and would have fallen had not her husband supported her.

"Do you not know me, Grace Henry?" cried Chickton, nearing her. "The death you doomed my friend and I to was not so sure as you imagined. We have escaped, and we are here—here with a purpose—here to prevent an infamous robbery, founded on ten years of plotting, conspiracy, and crime."

It was with a superhuman effort secretly that Grace prevented herself from fainting; she did so, however, and, though white as a sheet, stood upright and looked heroically in the face.

"I do not know you, sir," she exclaimed; "nor do I wish to make your acquaintance. I am here on special business, which can in no way concern you, and I will thank this gentleman"—indicating the secretary—"to perform his very obvious duty, which is to pay me the money I am entitled to claim."

She had taken no notice of Sydney, who sat in a chair, with his eyes riveted first upon her, then upon her husband. When he saw her he still loved her, when he saw her husband he began to hate her after a jealous fashion.

"I enter a protest against your claim," replied Chickton. "I allege that you have stolen the orders you have presented, and that you have no right or title to the money!"

"That is a matter for a court of law," she rejoined, coolly. "What can be clearer than a written order, unless you pretend that those orders are forgeries?"

"I do not impugn their authenticity."

"Oh, you do not!—Oh what ground then should the company refuse to pay upon them?"

"Simply because they are stolen."

"That is absurd! Here are the orders; I demand the money they represent in exchange for them!" exclaimed Grace, resolutely, for her heart was then trembling for its treasure. "This matter," she continued, "has stood over for ten years—do you wish it to be further prolonged?"

"Oh, no!" Chickton said. "It must and will be settled very shortly. Not much can be done to-day though in the way of its final settlement, for I intend to arrest you for the outrage you perpetrated at Sea View, which so nearly resulted in the murder of my friend and myself."

Without replying to this threat, Grace spoke to the secretary, and asked him if he would pay the orders which she had presented to him, as her enemies—as she called them—did not attempt to say they were forgeries.

The secretary firmly but politely refused.

"As there seems to be a dispute between you," he said, "and grave charges are brought by this gentleman against you, madam, I do not feel myself justified in parting with a large sum of money without first of all consulting with my directors."

"But here are the orders, signed by Mr. Tulse—the genuine orders?" she almost screamed.

"I know it."

"If these gentlemen have anything to complain of let them bring an action against me afterwards; at all events, do not shrink from performing your duty."

"I am performing it," replied the secretary, promptly, "and I may say that I never felt greater pleasure in performing any duty in my life than I do in performing this."

"Permit me to talk to this lady for a moment, sir," said Chickton.

"Well, who are you? and what have you to say?" demanded Mr. Ives, who had been silent, but now felt it incumbent upon him to say something.

"Stand on one side!" exclaimed Chickton. "You are too contemptible to be looked at. I am speaking to your wife, and I tell her that unless she renounces up those orders which she has stolen, one from Walter Tottenham, my poor friend whom she murdered, and one from me, whom she intended to kill, I will have a warrant for her arrest, which I hold in my pocket, executed at once, and proceed against her with relentless hostility."

"What do you mean?" said Grace. "I can see that there is a clique formed against me here, and that the secretary is biased against me."

"Your application stands adjourned to this day

week; during that time I shall see my directors, and on their advice I shall act," exclaimed the secretary. With these words he withdrew.

Grace saw that all hope of obtaining the money that day was at an end, and she was furious with rage and disappointment; her anger gave place to terror when she saw how Chickton regarded her, and perceived the menace which his eyes flashed forth at her.

At all events her wondrous beauty had no power over him. She could not conquer his heart as she had subdued the simple one of Sydney.

"Mrs. Ives," said Chickton, advancing close to her, and looking her fearlessly in the face, "you have the choice of making restitution or being given in charge of the police; take which alternative you like, but distinctly understand this, if the stolen orders are not delivered to me in five minutes, without any reservation, you will be placed in custody."

"On what charge?" she asked.

"On that of attempted murder. You and your husband will also be indicted for conspiracy."

"If I comply with your demands?"

"No further steps will be taken."

There was a pause, during which Grace and her husband talked earnestly together; he seemed to be trying to persuade her to listen to reason.

"You are wrong again," Cecil Ives said. "Consider the scandal attendant on a police charge and a criminal indictment. I cannot have my name dragged before the public, and object more especially when it will do no good. If I had known the suffering your ambitious schemes would have entailed upon me I never would have married you."

"It is too late to repine at that now," Grace said, scornfully.

"Give up the orders or I will compel you to do so!" cried Cecil Ives, for once showing a firmness that he ought to have exhibited years before.

The contempt expressed in her eyes was withering in the extreme, and he cowered before it, knowing what a puppet he had been in her hands, and how this sudden plucking up of courage was due more to a regard for his own person and name than to any feeling of honesty or interest in her.

Suddenly Grace went up to Chickton, and, holding out two pieces of paper, exclaimed:

"Mr. Chickton, there are the orders. I see I have mistaken your character. I thought you were a designing man, and an enemy of Mr. Sydney's. It was my intention to get the money into my own hands, then deliver it to him, as I may call myself a sort of cousin of his, through my connection with the Tulse family; but I see that you are honest, and I give you the orders. Take the money and be happy; do the best you can for the young man, who will become immensely rich, and will stand in need of a guide."

"Do not be afraid of that," said Chickton, taking the orders eagerly, and looking at them to assure himself of their authenticity.

They were growing old and discoloured with age, and there was no doubt that he held in his hand the original documents; he was the more sure in one instance because the initials of the secretary had been placed in one corner.

With a frankness that was convincing to Sydney, she walked across the room to him, and exclaimed:

"I am not so much to blame as may appear. Will you forgive me? I intended you no wrong. It was the sudden coming of your friend here that frightened me and paralyzed my action. I assure you his coming completely upset all my calculations. I have made what amends I can. You will get your fortune, and I hope you will enjoy it as you deserve to. Some day you will meet with a handsome wife, but"—and here she lowered her voice—"you will never meet with any woman, Sydney, who will love you as I have done, and as I do now."

The young man tried to speak, but his emotion choked him; a gurgling sound came into his throat and that was all.

Grace said no more; she took her husband's arm, and together they left the office, with as much dignity as they could preserve, though their hearts were sinking within them, and they were a prey to the most agonizing mental tortures.

All their cherished plans were dashed at one blow, and what made the failure more terrible, was the certainty of success in which they had indulged. The orders had been given up, and by that act Grace had apparently resigned all hope and expectation of gaining possession of Solomon Tulse's fortune. So at least her husband supposed, and in that belief she wished him to remain.

But this act of resignation, this apparent acceptance of her fate, was really one of the cleverest acts of her life.

During the journey home, which was performed in melancholy silence, she seemed to be plunged into the state of the most profound melancholy.

Cecil Ives was no better. He had relied on this inheritance to rehabilitate his shattered fortunes, now he saw himself deeply involved in debt, and without any prospect of getting disengaged from his entanglements.

The secretary received the orders from Chickton, and appeared perfectly satisfied with them.

"You have succeeded more easily than I anticipated," he said; "now tell me how you will have the money, which I am glad to see going to its right owner."

Chickton repeated this question to Sydney, who in a careless manner replied:

"If I can leave it here and draw upon it at pleasure I shall be quite satisfied."

"By all means, if such is your wish," exclaimed the secretary. "Favour me with your usual signature, if you please, and your drafts shall be duly honoured on presentation."

They all shook hands with the secretary when the business was over, and re-entered their cab to go to the hotel in Arundel Street.

"Now you are a millionaire," exclaimed Chickton. "My mission is accomplished, though I could wish you were a little more experienced."

"I would rather be poor and unknown, and work my way to fame," replied Sydney.

"But think, my dear friend," exclaimed Prescott, "how ardently you used to wish for money to go to Rome, and other Continental cities where art treasures are stored—think how much you can do, if you still love your art, and mean to study it—you can revel in a perfect mine of wealth."

"You shall do that, John," answered Sydney, with a kindly smile; "my purse is yours. For me art is dead. I shall never paint again."

Chickton made a sign to Prescott not to talk any more.

"He is gloomy now," he whispered; "we must get the idea of that woman out of his head, for it is clear that he still loves her."

"The blow is a heavy one," answered Prescott, in the same tone, "but time will do much to heal it; we must keep his mind occupied, and not let him brood."

"A dinner in the country to-day, and the theatre afterwards," suggested Chickton.

"Not the theatre! It was there he met her," replied Prescott, significantly.

Chickton was the enjoyer of more real pleasure than he had experienced since his arrival in England. His mission was, as he had said, accomplished, and he had but one regret, and that was that Sydney had not taken a fancy to Amine.

"If he had but loved my darling, all would have been well," said he to himself. "That, however, at present seems impossible; he has unhappily fallen under the fascination of a fiend."

Several days passed.

Sydney's friends did all that lay in their power to remove the weight that lay on his heart, but they only partially succeeded. They were very gay—if going to places of entertainment, drinking champagne by the dozen, driving into the country, running down to Brighton, or over to Paris, is being gay. Sydney would smile sometimes, but he never gave such a profound sigh of relief as he did when he could get into a room by himself, and sit in a corner, and conjure up the image of Grace, upon which phantom he would feast his hungry eyes, and long for the return of those few happy hours at Sea View, which he would have welcomed again though they were the heralds and the harbingers of coming death. He was carefully watched by Chickton, who was determined that he and Grace should not meet, and that he should receive no communication from her. His vigilance was defeated, however, for one day, while walking, a man slipped a note into Sydney's hand, and passed on quickly.

When alone Sydney read these words:

"I know not how to address you, but I cry to you for pardon from the depths of a broken heart. Mercy, mercy! your coldness, your silence proves to me that you hate while you condemn me. Oh! if you knew all! If I could kneel at your feet, and kiss your dear hands, while I begged permission to tell you my story, how you would pity me—and yet I may be wrong. You have a heart of stone. You do not feel as I do, and I must go down to the grave crying, 'I have loved him, and I love him still.'"

After reading this letter Sydney remained plunged in deep thought for some time.

"Is this madness?" he said, at length; "my reason holds me back, yet all the energy and force in my body urge me on. She is the magnet whose attraction I cannot resist. If there were death in her kisses I must see her. Yes, yes, she shall not pray in vain. I will go to her. It is I who will kneel at her feet, and say—pardon me for six weeks of neglect, of coldness, of a brutish apathy. And near her I shall find

that happiness which half a million of money cannot give me."

The syren was again luring him on to destruction. (To be continued.)

MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

CHAPTER XII

WITH Robert Hawksley's five hundred pounds Duke had purchased this pretty cottage, just outside the large, busy town of Speckhaven; and Rosanna's dream was realized of a cottage in the country, with flower garden and poultry yard.

Once every year since then Duke had received a letter, containing fifty pounds, and all of those fifty pounds were safely nestled in Speckhaven Bank for Polly.

Mr. Hawksley had gone to California when first the gold fever broke out there, and last Christmas, when his letter came, was there still, but, whether making that promised fortune or not, Duke had no means of knowing, and Mr. Hawksley never said.

Polly knew him as her godfather, and was very much obliged to him indeed for his handsome presents, which constituted such a nice little sum for her in the bank.

She had written him a letter every year since she first learned to write, but beyond this of herself or him she knew nothing. Duke still persevered in his old vocation, and was scene-painter-in-chief to the Speckhaven theatre, and portrait painter to the town.

He walked to Lyndith Grange sometimes in the gray of the summer evening, smoking his pipe, and thinking of that cold March night so long ago, when the romance of his life began. Of the actors in that romance he had never seen anything since the day he had bidden farewell to Robert Hawksley. Of Mr. Geoffrey Lyndith, of Sir Vane and Lady Charteris, he never even heard the names. They might be all dead and buried, so completely had they dropped out of his life.

The old Grange was utterly deserted now, the grim gate would yield to any hand that chose to push it, but few ever cared to do so. Stray artists who thought it picturesque in its decay made sketches of it when the sun shone, but after nightfall neither artist nor peasant liked to linger in its gloomy precincts.

Those visits, and an occasional look at his treasured opal ring, were all that remained to Duke, besides his bright Polly, to keep the memory of that past time alive.

Dr. Worth still told the story of that rainy night when he had been carried off bodily to the Grange, but people were getting tired of hearing it, and were more interested in the great house of the neighbourhood, Montalien Priory, where great goings on were at this time taking place.

The fourteen years had glided on smoothly, but one eventful month was destined to shine out a bright oasis in the desert.

Lord Montalien's second son would come of age on the third of June, and there was to be a birthday celebration, and that's why Polly stands here flushed, and swinging her gipsy hat by its rosy ribbons, and talking with many gestures and vast interest to Rosanna.

"Dinner at sunset on the lawn, Rosanna," the girl was saying, with her face radiant, "with all the tenantry and all the tradespeople belonging to the Priory, and anybody the bailiff and Mrs. Hamper the housekeeper like to invite besides. I have an invitation from both of them, and I'm going with Alice Warren. Then after dinner, and the speech-making, you know, and all that, there's to be a ball in the great entrance hall among the old fogies in armour and the antlers, and battle-axes, and boomerangs and things. A ball, Rosanna—a real, out-and-out ball!" repeated Polly, with owl-like solemnity.

"But, Polly, you're neither the tenantry nor the tradespeople," retorted Rosanna, who, having not an atom of pride for herself, had a great deal for Polly. "You're a young lady, and—"

"Fiddle! I beg your pardon, Rosanna, but I'm not a young lady. I'm Duke Mason the scene-painter's poor relation, brought up out of charity, and nothing else. A young lady to my mind is a person like—like Miss Hautton now, who never toasted a muffin, nor washed up the tea-things in her life. I know what I am—I wish I were a lady, but I'm not. I'm going to the dinner and the ball, Rosanna, and as it will be my first ball I intend to dance with everybody who asks me. If one can't be rich and aristocratic one's self, it is pleasant to mix with people who are, and the ladies and gentlemen are going to dance with the common herd and be sociable for once in a way."

Polly was very enthusiastic, and her meaning was clear. She was going to the ball, and would like to see who would stop her.

"Well, Polly, if you insist—but mind I don't like it—"

"Of course you don't, Rosanna—you never do like fun and frolic, and we're all worms, aren't we? But I'm going though, so please make haste and iron my new muslin dress, for I promised to call for Alice at four o'clock. And, oh, Rosanna! who knows perhaps Lord Montalien himself may ask me to dance."

"Stuff and nonsense, child! Lord Montalien is sixty-seven years old, and has the gout. A pretty figure an old man like that would cut, dancing with a child like you. Have the quality come down?"

"Come this morning—Lord Montalien and his two sons, Mr. Francis and Mr. Guy, Sir Vane and Lady Charteris, and their daughter, Miss Maud Charteris, and Miss Diana Hanton. Sir Vane and Miss Diana are both second cousins of my lord."

Polly pronounced these great names with an unction amusing to hear.

"There's a Mr. Allan Fane, too—an artist, Mrs. Hamper told me, who is said to be paying attention to the rich Miss Hanton—and all the gentry of the neighbourhood are to be there to-day."

"I should think," said Rosanna, getting the muslin robe ready for the iron, "that Lord Montalien should have made all this to-do when his eldest son and heir came of age, instead of this younger one."

"Mr. Guy is his favourite—everybody knows it. Mrs. Hamper told me the story. Lord Montalien," said Polly, intensely interested in her theme, "was married twice—I heard all about it up at the Priory. His first wife was rich, and plain, and ten years older than my lord, and a match of his father's choosing. Lord Montalien was in love with somebody else, but he yielded to his father and married the rich and ugly Miss Huntingdon, and hated her like poison."

"Polly!"

"Well, I don't know, of course—I should think he did—I would in his place! But, fortunately, she died two years after her marriage, leaving Mr. Francis, and there was his lordship free again. Of course he immediately returned to his first love, an Italian lady, and, oh, such a beauty! Her picture's up there in her boudoir, and Mr. Guy is her son. She died before a great while, too, and Lord Montalien has been a sort of Bamfylde Moore Carew ever since, wandering about like Noah's dove, and finding no rest for the sole of his foot."

"Polly, don't be irreverent!"

"So you see, Rosanna," pursued Polly, paying no attention, "it's clear enough how Mr. Guy comes to be his favourite. He looks like his mother, whom his father loved, and Mr. Francis looks like his mother, whom his father detested. That's logic, isn't it? Mr. Francis is very good-looking, you know, but Mr. Guy—oh, Rosanna!—Mr. Guy's an angel!"

With which Polly bounced away before Rosanna's shocked exclamation had time to be uttered.

"Make my dress nice, and take care it isn't limp, Rosanna," she called, over her shoulder; "don't spare starch, please. I must go and tell Duke."

She ran upstairs, whistling as she went, like a boy. She impetuously flung open a door upstairs and flashed in upon Duke like a fairy apparition.

It was a room big and bare, and altogether very much like that other painting-room at Half Moon Terrace.

The "Battle of Bannockburn" blazed in the sunshine, as it had done for the past sixteen years, a trifle dimmer and dustier perhaps with time.

Duke himself was unchanged—the same pale buff hair, pale buff complexion, mild blue eyes, and paint-daubed, shabby coat. To say that Duke idolized Polly—this bright, laughing, joyous fairy, who glorified their humdrum household by her radiant presence and ringing voice—would hardly be doing him justice.

He was her abject slave. She twined him round her little finger. She tyrannized over him, and tormented and admired him after the fashion of a spoilt younger sister. She made him teach her how to paint, to whistle, to row a boat, to fire a gun, to rough-ride the ponies, to play the fiddle, and to sing comic songs.

She had a beautiful voice, a clear, sweet, vibrating contralto, and knew everything from Kathleen Mavourneen to Jim Crow. She sang in a choir in one of the churches, and on one occasion, at a Speckhaven tea-party, only three months before, had nearly sent Rosanna into fits by giving them a comic song when solicited to sing. The audience, who had expected "Ever of Thee" or "Beautiful Star," sat spell-bound for an instant, then followed in the roar of laughter which Duke led. Everything Polly did, or said, or thought was good and admirable in Mr. Mason's sight.

"Have you heard the news, Duke?" the young lady demanded; "about the dinner at the Priory, I mean?"

"Yes," Mr. Mason placidly answered.

He had heard something about it, but hadn't paid

much attention. Lords and ladies and their junketings didn't greatly trouble his repose.

"Well, I'm going, Duke, and as it is to be my first ball I should think you might take a little interest in it, and not go on painting there in that unfeeling way."

"A person may paint and not be unfeeling. Don't be unreasonable, Polly! So you're going to make your debut, are you? What does Rosanna say?"

"Rosanna doesn't believe in balls, and thinks dancing an abomination. But she's ironing my dress for me to go all the same."

Duke looked at her admiringly.

"What a clever little thing you are, Polly. I wish I could manage her like that. They say the Iron Duke was a courageous man," the scene-painter said, rather irrelevantly. "I think he and Rosanna might have been made for each other, and that he missed her somehow. So you are going to the ball, Polly?"

"Yes. Lord Montalien and his sons, Mr. Allan Fane, Miss Diana Hanton, and Sir Vane and Lady Charteris and their daughter, Miss Maud, are to be there."

Duke Mason was very carefully putting a streak of purple into the horizon of his sketch, but the brush suddenly dropped from his fingers and spoiled the opal gray sky in an unsightly blot.

"Sir Vane and Lady Charteris!" He repeated the names, looking at her blankly. "Sir Vane and Lady Charteris!"

For fourteen years he had not heard those names, and now to hear them from her lips.

"Certainly! Good gracious, how you stare, Duke! You don't know Sir Vane and Lady Charteris, do you?"

Mr. Mason drew a long breath, and looked at his disfigured sketch.

"There's an awkward accident, and I've spent all the morning over this. No, I don't know Sir Vane and Lady Charteris, but the names sound familiar somehow. They'll be at the ball, Polly? But of course you will see nothing of them."

"Of course I shall though," cried Miss Mason, with spirit. "Oh, Duke!" the girl cried, with sudden passion, "why wasn't I born a lady, or why wasn't I born in some land where the poor man is the equal of the rich man, in spite of Fortune's caprices?"

"There is no such country, duchess."

"I wish there were," Polly went on, her blue eyes flashing; "but it's no use talking—I'm only Polly Mason, and I'll never be anything else."

"Unless some poor fellow in a moment of madness should one day marry you, duchess."

Miss Mason looked up, the shadow clearing away, and her smile at its brightest.

"Duke, suppose—it isn't likely, you know, of course—that one of these young gentlemen should fall in love with me. Duke, that Guy Earls court is splendid—splendid. His picture hangs in one of the drawing-rooms—such a picture, and such a drawing-room. He is handsome more than Lord Byron himself, and I'm in love with him already. I say, Duke, you might call for me—the ball won't break up until midnight. By-bye; when I'm dressed I'll come in, and you shall see how I look."

She ran out of the room and down the stairs, and Duke was alone.

The sunshine streamed on his spoiled picture, and he stood staring vacantly at it, his brush poised, and his thoughts a hundred miles away.

It had come at last then—what he had dreaded so often; and Lady Charteris was alive and here, and this very day would stand face to face with her daughter. She had not written—no letter from her had ever reached Half Moon Terrace, and perhaps she was heartless and proud, and had lost all interest in the child she had given to a stranger.

Would she recognize Polly?—she had her father's eyes and manner—would she recognize them? Would the name strike her memory, or was the man to whom she had confided her baby daughter forgotten too? Would this meeting of to-day end in Polly's being taken from them or—

The door opened, and Polly came in once more.

She had been gone over an hour while he sat there lost in painful thoughts. To lose "the duchess!" Life held no misery so bitter as that for Duke. She came in dressed for the fête—very simply attired in white muslin, a pink ribbon sash, a cluster of pink roses lighting up the pure whiteness, and her gold chain and locket her sole ornament.

So with her curling auburn hair, her starry blue eyes, her bright, sparkling face, she stood in the sunlight, a charming vision.

"Will I do, Duke?"

Something rose in Duke's throat and nearly choked him. Two willowy arms went round his neck in an instant.

"Why, Duke! Dear old Duke, don't you want me to go? I never knew it—why didn't you say so? I'll take off these things, and sit here with you all the afternoon."

He held the hands that would have flung the roses out of her belt.

"No, duchess, go to the ball and enjoy yourself—and Heaven bless you whatever happens! I'll call for you and fetch you home."

He opened the door for her—while she looked at him wonderingly—to let her pass out.

"But, Duke, you're quite sure you don't mind my going? Rosanna objects, but then Rosanna says we're all worms, and that it's all vanity. But if you would rather I stayed—"

"I had rather you would go—haven't I said so? There, run away, Polly; I must get back to work."

"Good-bye, then," Polly said.

And the white dress, and the short yellow curls and pink roses vanished down the staircase, and Duke went back to his work.

To his work. He painted no more that day. He sat holding his brush and looking blankly at his spoiled canvas. Was his dull life again about to be disturbed by the coming of this great lady, who was Polly's mother? How would the meeting of this day end?

It was precisely half-past three by the parlour clock when Miss Polly Mason started forth to enjoy herself.

All her dreams were about to be realized—she was to behold in the actual flesh those splendid beings of that upper world, of whom she had read so often—splendid, brilliant, beautiful beings, who peppered their conversation so copiously with French phrases, who dwelt in halls of dazzling light, and who lived in perpetual new silk dresses and diamonds.

She was to see them at last, hitherto she had only known them in books and in her dreams.

Polly had read much—light literature chiefly, and a great deal of poetry. She knew all about the "Corsair" and "Manfred" and the "Glauc" and "Lara," and the other gentlemen of that ilk—she could repeat whole stanzas of "Childe Harold," and inflict copious extracts of the "Revolt of Islam" upon you if you would listen. She had cried her pretty eyes as red as ferrets over the "Scottish Chiefs" and the "Children of the Abbey" and "Fatherless Fanny" in her earlier years, and more lately over beautiful "Ethel Newcome" and her troubles. She was intensely romantic. Oh, to be the Lady Helen Mar, and to dress as a page, and seek out the glorious hero in his prison, to have him torn from her arms and break his noble heart upon the scaffold, then, in a few days after, to break hers, promiscuous-like, as Mrs. Gamp would say, upon his coffin. That would be bliss!

But she was only Polly Mason, whom the grocer's clerk left old and valued customers to wait upon, and whom the haberdasher's young man saw home from singing school; and Sir William Wallace and Lord Mortimers were not for her.

The little French dancing-master of Speckhaven, who had taught her to dance like a fairy, had also taught her to speak French. She could play the violin beautifully, though she did not know one note on the piano from another, and she had painted in her way ever since she could hold a brush. She was a very clever little girl altogether, and as self-possessed as any duchess in the land, and life was opening on a new page for her to-day, and her heart was throbbing with expectant rapture.

The sun was low in the West when the door of Duke's painting-room was flung open, and Rosanna, pale and excited, stood before him.

"Duke," she gasped, "I never thought of it till this minute. I heard the name, and the truth never struck me. Lady Charteris is at Montalien, and Polly has gone there; and, Duke! Duke! Lady Charteris is our Polly's mother!"

(To be continued.)

THE IMAGE IN THE HEART.

A Christmas Story.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Dangerous Ground," "Heart's Content," "Sweet Eglantine," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

May kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine.

BURNS.

In vain did duty struggle with inclination in Zoraida's breast. She felt it impossible to sacrifice herself to save her father. Indeed there are very few girls in these matter-of-fact days who offer themselves up on the shrine of filial affection.

Basil was quiet, genteel, and good looking, but if he possessed these qualifications so did Mr. Vanderlyn in a much more highly marked degree.

Basil was not of her set. If she had not known him to have been a gipsy she might have taken him for a gentleman; but she did know it, and the fact rendered him disagreeable in her eyes. As a friend she might have tolerated him, but as a hus-

band she despised him. So after a very short deliberation her mind was made up. Come what come woe, come poverty with all its horrors, she would not accept Basil, and she sought her father to tell him so.

Mr. Edleston listened to her with an expression of disappointment, but he was neither angry nor violent.

"I said I would not coerce you, my dear," he exclaimed, "nor will I. You have made a deliberate choice, and upon your head must rest the consequences of your act."

"If Mr. Leslie Magendie, as Basil now calls himself, should take everything away from us, papa," answered Zoraide, "the prospect is not so very gloomy, and I will tell you why. There is no doubt that Mr. Vanderlyn loves me, and his relations like me. You can come and live with us when we are married, for Horace is rich. He has told me so."

"Yes, he is rich," repeated her father.

"Very well. He shall give you money to support your position. We will go to his house, and it will be merely exchanging one residence for another."

Mr. Edleston shook his head dubiously.

"You seem to have doubts about the accomplishment of what I suggest," said Zoraide.

"I must confess I have, though I do not want to discourage you, my darling," answered her father. "In the first place sons-in-law are not generally so generous as you seem to imagine, and, probably, Mr. Vanderlyn, after granting me a small pension, would think he had done all that was required of him. Secondly—"

He hesitated.

"Well, papa; and secondly?" said Zoraide.

"Secondly, my dear, remember the advice about the hare, 'before you cook your hare you must catch him'; and, though I do not say Mr. Vanderlyn is not an honourable man, the large fortune I had promised you was a strong temptation for any one to marry you."

"You mean to insinuate that Horace will be false and give me up when he knows that I am poor?" said Zoraide, whose eyes began to burn and her heart to throb violently at the bare possibility of such a thing.

"That was what I hinted at."

"Ridiculous!" continued Zoraide, confidently. "I know Horace too well to indulge such an unworthy view of his probable conduct for an instant. He is the soul of honour, and loves me passionately for myself alone. He has often told me so, and said that I shall have my own way in everything after marriage, so that I can easily arrange for you to stay with us when not in town attending to your parliamentary duties. Be perfectly easy about that, dear papa, and believe me that I am acting rightly in rejecting this presumptuous gipsy, who would be no companion for me and no credit to our family."

"Yet he is a Magendie, and consequently a gentleman by birth. Moreover, he is your cousin."

"I have heard that marriages between cousins are generally unlucky and inadvisable. However, my mind is made up."

"I shall say no more, my dear," answered Mr. Edleston, mildly. "Consider the matter settled in accordance with the determination you have arrived at. By the way, you have not seen Mr. Vanderlyn lately."

"No, nor heard from him for six weeks."

"That would be about the time these sinister reports were circulated concerning me."

"I can account for his silence, though," said Zoraide, "for he told me the last time we met that he thought he should have to make a journey to the Continent to see after some property he had in Silesia."

Mr. Edleston smiled as if he did not believe in this Silesian business; but, not wishing to discourage his daughter, he told her he hoped all would happen for the best, and she went away radiant to write a long letter to Horace Vanderlyn.

"I must tell him all," she said to herself. "It would not be honourable for me not to be frank with him. I will let him know what temptation I have been exposed to, and how I have conquered it. If it were possible he will love me more for it."

So she took up her writing-desk and wrote to Horace on some scented note paper ornamented with her crest and monogram.

She told him how dear he was to her, and how fervently she loved him. She entered into full particulars of her father's distress, and said that it was very likely they would have to give up everything to the newly discovered heir, who had a right to inherit under the provisions of his father's will, provided he could prove his case, which there was every likelihood of his doing. In conclusion she sent him a thousand kisses, and said how delighted she should be to see him, and hear from his own dear lips that her altered circumstances made no difference in his affection for her.

Poor child! she knew little yet of the worldliness of men and their essentially fickle nature.

Days passed and the weeks multiplied themselves, but no answer came from Horace Vanderlyn.

The law business progressed much more rapidly than is usual in such cases, and the Master of the Rolls gave his decision against Mr. Edleston.

This was a severe blow, but it had been anticipated. He had the right of appeal to the Lords Justices, and from them to the Privy Council, but the case was so clear against him that it seemed the height of folly to prolong a useless litigation.

Acting upon the advice of Mr. Gairford, he made terms with his opponents, and, in consideration of Mr. Leslie Magendie, as every one now called Basil, not compelling him to give an account of the money he had expended during his possession of the estates he agreed to give up his tenure on the last day of the year.

As may be imagined, it was a melancholy Christmas. The Edlestons had intended to have the house full of company and make merry, but they found themselves as they were when they first came to the Priory—alone. Then their prospects were bright, and they hoped for enjoyment when their period of mourning was over.

Now how changed was everything.

They had held Milton Priory for one year, during which they had tasted all the pleasures that large wealth can bestow.

Mr. Edleston had made a brilliant entry into Parliament, and some of his speeches had been extensively reported in the weekly and daily papers. He was looked upon as a rising man, and no doubt would have been able to command a place in the Ministry when his party came into power, for he had supported them with all the influence that his money and the position he held in his county conferred upon him.

It was Christmas Day.

Mrs. Edleston and her daughter had always been accustomed to go to church on that day, but they did not do so on the present occasion, as they felt that their presence in the parish church would expose them to much scrutiny and give rise for gossip.

Zoraide was low-spirited, for she could not understand the prolonged silence of Horace Vanderlyn. She did not doubt the existence of his love for her, but she feared that some accident had befallen him.

It was about twelve o'clock, and the house looked dreary, and did not possess a warm, cheering look such as belongs to this festive season of the year.

The servants were all under notice to quit on the thirty-first of December, and they had not taken the trouble to decorate the house with mistletoe and holly.

Mr. Edleston had written to the whip of his party, announcing his change of fortune, and his intention to accept the Chiltern Hundreds, which is the way in which a Member vacates his seat in Parliament.

He intended to return to town and seek for employment in the City again, as he couldn't take any money with him, a receiver having been already appointed for the estate.

Never had he passed a more miserable Christmas Day. In his poorer state he had been able to invite a few friends to dine with him, and a carpet dance or a round game in the evening had made the time fly pleasantly by.

Lunch had just been placed on the table by the footmen—who were careless and surly, because they knew all about their master's private affairs, and were fully aware that his reign was over at Milton Priory—when a visitor was announced.

"Mr. Chiffney," said Mr. Edleston, looking at the card. "I don't know the name, but ask him in."

A young, handsome, and well-dressed gentleman entered, and said that he was a friend of Horace Vanderlyn's. Then he was made welcome at once. Zoraide's eyes brightened, and she looked at her father as if she would say:

"I told you so. He has been ill, or something, and, not being able to come himself, he has sent a friend."

Mr. Edleston even looked pleased and expectant, while his wife beamed pleasantly and encouraging glances upon this truly welcome guest.

CHAPTER XVII.

Though much grieved at his loss, I at length began to revive from the shock it at first caused me. *The Lily of the Desert.*

The visitor looked embarrassed, and did not take anything to eat, though pressed to do so. He seemed as if he had an unpleasant task to fulfil and did not like to taste the bread and salt, to use an Eastern phrase, of his entertainers.

"How is Mr. Vanderlyn?" asked Mr. Edleston, after a few preliminary remarks. "He is well, I hope; it is long since we had the pleasure of seeing him."

"I left him in Paris three days ago," rejoined Mr. Chiffney.

"Ah! in France. A gay city, I believe. Full of handsome and rich ladies and gentlemen. Quite the place to enjoy oneself."

"I hope he has not lost his heart there," hazarded Mrs. Edleston, by way of saying something.

"How remarkable that you should make such a guess," answered Mr. Chiffney, in some confusion, "for it is just what he has done. He has made arrangements to marry a Russian lady, the Princess Klavinak—just twenty-one, with a fortune of I don't know how many millions of roubles."

If a thunderbolt had fallen in the midst of the party their consternation could not have been more complete.

Horace Vanderlyn false, about to be married, forgetful of his vows! It could not be true.

Mr. Edleston was like a shipwrecked mariner who despairingly sees the frail plank to which he has been clinging remorselessly torn from his feeble grasp by a huge and merciless wave. His last hope had gone.

Zoraide sat like a statue chiselled out of hard, cold marble. Her heart sorely pained. She was like one who has received a stunning blow, which paralyzes the action of the brain.

There was a momentary pause, during which her father recovered from his astonishment, and said, with natural indignation:

"I trust, sir, you are not trifling with the feelings of my daughter, for if you are a friend of any standing of Mr. Vanderlyn's you must know that he was, with my full consent, I regret to say, engaged to my daughter."

"I have heard him say so," rejoined Mr. Chiffney, coolly.

"And he deliberately breaks off his engagement?"

"Yes."

"And you, who call yourself a gentleman, consent to be the bearer of this disgraceful news?"

"Well, you see, one will do much to serve a friend. I did not wish to come to you, because I fully expected a scene like this. However, it cannot be helped. I am very sorry, I am sure, for the young lady, and respect your feelings as a father."

"Did Mr. Vanderlyn arrange with you for this news to reach us in this abrupt manner? Did he allege no reason for his extraordinary and ungentlemanly conduct?"

"I have chosen my own way of telling the story," returned Mr. Chiffney, whose confusion increased momentarily, "and if I have blundered or inflicted unnecessary pain I beg to tender you my most sincere apology. In these delicate matters I fancy it is best to come to the point at once. I may be wrong, but at all events you know the worst without any beating about the bush. As to my friend's reasons for his behaviour, you must know as well as he that circumstances have changed materially since he first had the honour of an introduction to Miss Edleston."

"You allude to my reverse of fortune?"

"I do."

"But surely that is not a good and valid reason," urged Mr. Edleston.

"I believe it was arranged that you were to give the lady a hundred thousand pounds. Can you fulfil that part of the contract?"

"Unhappily I cannot, and had I known Mr. Vanderlyn was so marvellously I would not have allowed the engagement to go on. Here is a rich man, who breaks his engagement with a girl simply because she is poor. Times have altered strangely since I was young, or else I was brought up in a peculiar school. This sort of thing would have been characterized as brutal in the extreme. I can see no excuse for it."

"My friend is not rich—far from it," Mr. Chiffney hastened to say, "and I do not mind telling you that his only chance consists in making a good match. His estate is mortgaged, and his losses on the racecourse have been very heavy of late. He went abroad simply and purely because he was unable to pay his debts of honour."

"You astonish me. But one more question. Does not Mr. Vanderlyn know that he can be tried in a court of law for his baseness?"

"Breach of promise, you mean," said Mr. Chiffney, stroking his moustache. "He has thought of that, and authorizes me to say that he will pay any reasonable demand you like to make upon him, and that you and his solicitor consider fair and just."

Suddenly there was a sound as of a low sob, then a heavy fall.

Zoraide had heard enough to convince her that her lover was false. The idol she had set up was shattered to pieces, and she found that the fair thing was made of the vilest of dross.

"The girl has fainted!" cried Mr. Edleston, ringing the bell, while his wife ran to render what assistance she could, holding her hand in her lap, and chasing her cold temples, so white and death-like.

"Ah," said Mr. Chiffney, "a natural shock, poor thing!"

Mr. Edleston could bear no more. The man's consummate coolness and want of feeling were so galling to him that he lost all command over himself.

Taking up a glass of wine, he threw it in Mr. Chiffney's face, saying:

"Get out of the house, sir!—it is mine while I am in it, and I will be master of it. Go at once, or I may be tempted to do you some violence, which I should regret, as you have been a guest under my roof."

Wiping his face with a scented pocket-handkerchief, Mr. Chiffney smiled and said:

"Invisible old gentleman! Great pity to lose one's temper, and lucky for you that you are the girl's father, and that I am Vanderlyn's messenger. However, I cannot well resent it. Fa-ta! We may meet again, when, depend upon it, I shall return the compliment!"

So saying he quitted the apartment, and let himself out of the house.

Zoraide was carried upstairs, more dead than alive. She had a succession of fainting fits, each more prolonged than the other. Towards night she was calmer, and her mother endeavoured to comfort her to the best of her ability, but it is very difficult to assuage the torture that a young girl feels at the annihilation of her first love.

The future had looked as bright and rose-lined to her. She fancied she should be so happy in Horace Vanderlyn's love, and to find that he was unworthy of her was a great trial.

He had loved her for her money alone. There was a sense of degradation in thinking that it was her money he cared for. Burden of love was a passion that will endure through every hardship and misfortune. She despised money, and looked upon it as a dream. How lone then must he have appeared when the acquisition of it seemed to be his sole object?

"Forget him, my dear," said Mrs. Edleston. "Heaven has dealt hardly with us, but there may be a good time in store. Be brave, and all will yet be well."

"Leave me, dear mamma—please, please do!" sobbed Zoraide; "do not try to comfort me! I shall be much better if I am left alone—I shall indeed. Do not be afraid; I am not likely to go mad, or do anything desperate. Let me think, and I shall perhaps get over it sooner than you expect."

At this request Mrs. Edleston went downstairs and joined her husband. He had a bottle of brandy before him, and had been drinking.

"Pray do not forget yourself, my dear!" she exclaimed. "You are usually so temperate. Drinking can do no good!"

"It drowns care. Goodness knows," he rejoined. "that I have enough on my shoulders now to break any man's back. Let me alone, Fauny. I am the best judge of what is good for me."

"I wish we had remained at Highbury, and never come to this grand place. It is so humiliating to have to go back to one's former position."

"What we ought to blame is our ambition. Wickness is punished on this earth!" exclaimed her husband. "You remember how annoyed we were when Magendie married, and when he had a son we did not know what to do. You advised me to have the child kidnapped, and I bribed the nurse. She stole the child, and we never suspected for a moment that he would reappear and be able to sustain his claim. However he has done so, and there is an end of it."

"We were wrong—I admit that—and perhaps we are properly punished," answered Mrs. Edleston; "but my spirit is not yet broken."

"Nor mine," he said. "I can and will work, always provided I can get something to do, though that is difficult in the present overcrowded state of the stock market in the City. Better in these days to have a trade, or be a skilled mechanic, than to be educated and good at accounts."

"You will succeed, never fear, dear," said his wife, encouragingly. "Do not give way."

"Is Zoraide better?" he asked.

"Yes, and she is in a better frame of mind. She seems resigned to her fate."

"Vanderlyn is a villain."

"He is indeed. Who would have thought of his behaving as he has done?"

"Not I, certainly. I wish that she had never met him," said Mr. Edleston, bitterly. "For then she might have put up with Leslie Magendie, who is madly in love with her. I had a letter from him only this morning, couched in a most gentlemanly spirit. He said he was sorry Miss Edleston could not love him, but he would not press her farther, as his addresses seemed so distasteful to her. He added that he should be pleased if I would do exactly as I liked while I remained at the Priory, and if I wished for any extension of time he would cheerfully grant it, and, further, that I might take anything away with me I had a fancy for—such as pictures, wines, and other things."

"That was indeed generous."

"And for that reason I shall take nothing. If he had met me in a different spirit I might have defied him and done as I liked. Now everything in this house is sacred."

"Still," said Mrs. Edleston, who had always been his temptress, "there are several things I consider I have a right to, and there is no harm in spoiling the Egyptians."

Mr. Edleston frowned and rebuked her severely, at which she retired in an angry manner.

After this the wretched Christmas passed quickly. Zoraide grew better, but was quiet and reserved. She had no animation, and seldom spoke to any one. The greater portion of her time she passed in her own chamber, the privacy of which she loved.

Sometimes she would mutter to herself, "Not a word of adieu, not a line;" at such times she was thinking of Horace Vanderlyn, but like a sensible girl she strove bravely to banish him from her memory.

When the time came the Edlestons went to London and took apartments at Baywater. The sale of their jewellery brought them a small sum, upon the proceeds of which they lived, while Mr. Edleston went every day into the City to try and obtain some employment.

He found that during his absence some of his friends had failed in business, some had emigrated, others were dead, and those who remained had no vacancies, so he returned day after day unsuccessful, and the iron of disappointment began to enter into his soul.

Six months passed and all the news of Elvetham and Milton Priory he received was from Mr. Gainford, the solicitor, who sent him a letter, in which he stated that the Priory was shut up and deserted. Mr. Leslie Magendie, the Basil whom we have known, had severed himself from his old companions, making them handsome allowances, he had paid Jaggars a large sum for his services, and after making all these arrangements, he had gone abroad without leaving any address where a letter might find him. Mr. Edleston had fancied that he would come again after Zoraide, and that she would be induced to accept him after what had happened.

Thus were all his hopes crushed.

Zoraide never mentioned Mr. Vanderlyn's name. She obtained a situation in Baywater, near their lodgings, as daily governess at a salary of forty pounds a year, and seemed to throw all her energy into her employment.

She was paid monthly, and with religious care she gave what she received to her mother. But Mrs. Edleston was not satisfied with this apparent calm. She saw that there was a fire raging under her smooth exterior, and she feared that she would perish in the heroic struggle she was making to do her duty and weather the storm.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Damon: Existence! what is that? a name for nothing!

It is a cloudy sky chased by the winds.—Its fickle form no sooner chosen than changed! It is the whirling of the mountain flood, Which, as we look upon it, keeps its shape. Though what composed that shape, and what composes.

Hath passed—will pass—nay, and is passing on, Even while we think to hold it in our eyes, And deem it there. Old Play.

We come to another Christmas Day.

It was a little cheerier than the last two, though not much.

The Edlestons had changed their apartments, and those they occupied were poorer, but there was an air of contentment about them which contrasted well with the gilded misery we have witnessed at Milton Priory.

Mr. Edleston was still out of employment. No one would engage him, and starvation would have stared him in the face had not Mr. Gainford sent him a sum of money, amounting to two hundred and fifty pounds, which he said a friend had given him to transmit for his benefit, but who the friend was or whence the money came he could not discover.

The timely help enabled him to spend what he called a Merry Christmas, and there is no doubt that Christmas may be quite as merry and happy in a poor home as in a rich one. The great requisite is to have a mind resolved upon being happy, no matter what may betide.

All the family had been to church and tried to profit by the lesson they heard discoursed from the pulpit. A good dinner had been well cooked, and at four o'clock they sat down to enjoy it. Wines and spirits flanked the board.

They had not invited any one to join them, for the simple reason that they found they had no friends in their adversity, and therefore they preferred being alone.

"Come," said Mr. Edleston, taking his place at the head of the table, "let us be merry for once. We have enough and to spare for to-day, and we will see if we cannot be happier on this day than we have been for two years past. I believe in being

jolly on Christmas Day. It is one of my superstitions, so you must humour me!"

"Certainly," replied the wife. "I have every disposition to do so, and I say that in this changeful world people ought to be happy while they can!"

"Hear, hear! You always were a philosopher, my dear!" answered her husband, standing up to carve a huge turkey, well stuffed with sausage meat. "Come along, Zory, my darling. We shall have to drink your health presently."

Zoraide was looking out of the window at the snow-covered street, and when she heard her name pronounced she said, without moving:

"I don't want any dinner, thank you."

"Not want any dinner!" repeated Mr. Edleston, with startled emphasis. "What does the girl mean?"

He stopped in the midst of his carving, looking at her in perplexity as he held the uplifted knife and fork in his hands.

"For some time past I have seen a poor man shivering near a lamp-post. He looked so miserable," she said, "that I cannot eat anything while I think he is without. Perhaps he has no comfortable home, and no nice dinner prepared for him. Look how he shivers, and he has such a thin, shabby black frock-coat on. I should say he has been in a good position."

"And has come down! Ah, in that case I can feel for him," answered her father.

"Oh!" cried Zoraide, "our boasted civilization is something dreadful. The savage in the woods can supply his wants, if he will hunt for game, but—"

"So can people here, if they will work."

"Suppose they can't get it to do. Think of your own case, papa."

"My dear girl," exclaimed Mrs. Edleston, "do not spoil the pleasure your father anticipated having to-day by your ill-natured remarks. Come from the window and sit down. I daresay the man is only begging."

"Only begging!" repeated Zoraide. "Can anything be more dreadful? But no; he does not look like a beggar. He seems as if he were deliberating whether he should go, and what he should do. It is something dreadful to me to think that any one should be left out in the cold on a day like this, when the Saviour of the world was born. It ought to be a day of glad tidings and rejoicing."

"Ask him in!" exclaimed Mr. Edleston.

"What!" said his wife, in surprise.

"We have enough and to spare," replied her husband. "Ask him in, I say. Let him partake of our spread. Why not? If he is homeless and hungry we shall be doing our duty. What did we hear this morning? 'I was hungry and ye took me not in.' He shall come in. Zory, my love, put the cover on this turkey while I go outside and give your interesting mendicant an invitation to dinner."

Mr. Edleston went out into the snow, approaching the lone man, whom he accosted, saying:

"Will you come and taste our good cheer? This is a day when man should meet his fellow man in a Christian spirit, and, if you will so far honour us, we shall be glad of your company."

The person he spoke to was young, but he appeared to have long sojourned under a Southern sun, for his complexion was dark, and he had a long black beard and whiskers.

"Thank you," he rejoined, starting perceptibly. "I have nowhere to go, and I shall be pleased to dine with you if you will allow me to make you some recompense."

"If you have money and can go elsewhere I recall my invitation."

"It is not that. Money I have none; but I possess a little trinket which belonged to my mother; if you have a wife or daughter they might cherish it."

"Very well; I accept your terms. Your trinket for my dinner; but if you should ever want it back again—and you ought to value it—"

"I do value it dearly."

"Then you shall have it back for the asking; by what name shall we know you?"

"Call me Smith," answered the stranger, hastily; and, pulling his shabby, threadbare coat close to him, he followed Mr. Edleston into the house.

He bowed with well-bred politeness to the ladies and took a chair which was placed for him at the table.

Mr. Edleston introduced him as Mr. Smith, and, after having a few glasses of wine and eating some of the excellent turkey, to which all did justice, the warmth came back to his chilled limbs, and a genial glow suffused itself over his face.

The plum pudding came and went, and the dessert was placed upon the table; more wine followed, then some punch.

The stranger proved to be a very agreeable person, who talked well and modestly upon every subject.

Zoraide grew quite interested in him, and Mr. and



[AN INVITATION TO DINNER.]

Mrs. Edleston assured him again and again that they were delighted to have made his acquaintance. They tried several times to learn something of his position and history, but he remained obstinately silent, and would not gratify a curiosity which, if it had been persisted in, would have been impertinent.

About eight o'clock he rose, and, after thanking his kind entertainers for their very seasonable hospitality, announced his intention of taking his departure.

"Do not leave us at present; our fun is only just beginning," said Mr. Edleston; "wait awhile, and we will call the landlord and landlady up and have a round game at cards."

"Thank you, I cannot stay," replied the stranger. "Do not press me."

"As you like. It is not my way to half do anything, and, if you choose to stay, you are more than welcome."

The stranger was about to shake hands with the ladies when he paused, and said:

"You have forgotten our agreement."

"What was that?" asked Mr. Edleston.

"I offered you a trinket, which you said one of the ladies of your household would take. If I may venture to do so, I will present it to this young lady."

"To me?" said Zoraide.

"With your kind permission. It is all I have to offer you for your good nature."

"I cannot take it."

"Why not?" said the stranger, with a smile. "I have never heard that the Good Samaritan refused a recompense from the man whom he succoured after he fell amongst thieves. Here it is. It is not worth much intrinsically, though it has an interest in my eyes which all the gold and gems in the world could not equal."

As he spoke he took from his pocket a locket attached to a splendidly wrought gold chain.

Zoraide took it languidly, but no sooner had her eyes fallen upon it than she uttered a cry.

"The Image in the Heart!" she exclaimed.

"What is the matter, my dear?" asked Mr. Edleston.

"Look!" she exclaimed, holding up the crystal. "It is the Image in the Heart! But one person could have that."

"Then you are—" began Mr. Edleston, turning to the stranger, who interrupted him.

"Leslie Magendie!" he exclaimed. "Forgive the ruse I adopted to gain admission to your household on this day. I did not exaggerate when I said that I had nowhere to go, for I have been abroad all the year, and have no friends in England."

As he spoke he threw off his shabby coat, under which was one new and handsome. Then he looked, as he was—a gentleman.

Shaking him by the hand, while his face beamed with pleasure, Mr. Edleston said:

"I made you welcome when I thought you poor and homeless; now you are doubly so."

Zoraide tendered him back the locket.

"Keep it," said Leslie, no longer the shy and bashful Basil whom we have known, but polished and travelled. "I know of no one more worthy to guard my treasure. Indeed, I have a duplicate. For two years past I have had another image in the heart."

"Who's?" queried Zoraide.

"Your own, Miss Edleston," he answered, looking affectionately at her. "Since we first met on Christmas Eve at the old Priory, under such peculiar circumstances, your fair and lovely image has been enshrined in my heart, and the more you repulsed me the more jealously I guarded it."

A faint blush overspread Zoraide's alabaster neck and shoulders, and mounted with a crimson glow to her face.

"You are too good to take any interest in a poor girl like myself," she said. "But I thank you, and now," she added, desirous of turning the conversation, which was becoming embarrassing to her, "I presume you are about to return to the Priory?"

"It awaits the coming of its mistress."

"Indeed," said Zoraide, with a tone of disappointment she could not repress. "Have you then seen some foreign beauty whom you are about to make your wife?"

"No."

"Some English bells?"

"Yes. But whether she will be my wife or not is more than I can tell," answered Mr. Magendie.

"I should think she would not hesitate twice," said Mr. Edleston.

There was a pause, during which Mr. and Mrs. Edleston drew their chairs judiciously nearer the fire.

The two young people, left as it were to themselves, sat on the sofa, and in a short time Leslie Magendie had become bold enough to take Zoraide's hand in his, she making no resistance.

"Have I altered, Miss Edleston?" he asked.

"For the better, if I may say so. I should not have known you again," she replied.

"Do you remember what I said to your father in the park of the Priory last year?" he pursued.

"Not exactly," she answered, evasively. "What was it?"

"That I loved you, and would give you all I possessed in the world."

"Do you think so now?" she murmured.

"Yes—a thousand times yes. Will you have me? I came here to-day to ask you to be my wife. I will lay my fortune at your feet. Pardon the abruptness of the avowal, but I am peculiar in many things I do. Accept me, and a life of happiness is in store for us; refuse me, and I shall wander over the face of the earth like the poor gipsy I was when you first knew me. Answer me, Zoraide, yes or no."

"Yes," she replied, in so low a tone that her voice was scarcely audible.

He pressed her hand fervently, and gazed tenderly into the liquid depths of her soft blue eyes.

Then they sat for some time without speaking, their hearts too full for words.

Then Mr. Edleston, who had been asleep, woke up, and they had more wine, and Leslie brewed a wassail cup, and Zoraide played and sang, and they passed such a pleasant, happy evening as they had never before experienced. Zoraide whispered the news to her mother, who told her husband that the rich Mr. Magendie had asked Zoraide to be his bride, and she had consented.

All were radiant. They had come to the end of the long lane of misery which had seemed to have no turning.

They talked of the Priory, and made arrangements for their return, and it was agreed that Mr. Edleston should go into Parliament again, and be the great man once more that he had been, while Leslie, fond of the fields and the woods, and having no taste for politics, would be a gentleman farmer, and live always on the estate with his dear little wife.

And Zoraide in a few hours got to love him dearly, for she found that his was a rich and good if not highly cultivated mind. He abhorred all that was bad, and could love passionately. She could not but admit that he had grown very handsome, and as she nestled up to him, while he put his strong, protecting arm round her waist, she felt he was a man to look up to and adore.

There our tale draws to a close.

Three Christmas Days have passed, and the last one was the happiest.

When affairs in this world are at their worst, and the sky lowers and looks black, there is seen to be a change. Hope and wait with a firm trust in Providence.

Zoraide found that she was indeed the image in her husband's heart, and her married life flowed on with the even current of a woodland stream.

Never once did she regret marrying Mr. Leslie Magendie, who in no respect reminded her of the formerly distasteful Basil the gipsy.

THE END.



[THE RIVALS.]

THE SNAPT LINK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sybil's Inheritance," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

If this thou dost accord, albeit
A heavy doom 'tis thine to meet.
That doom shall halt absolve thy sin.
And mercy's gate may receive thee within.

GERTRUDE MUGRAVE involuntarily shrank back under the partial shelter of the large canvas before her as Rupert de Vere strode rather than walked into the large studio, garnished as it was with half-finished or unframed pictures, standing in somewhat disorderly heaps against the walls, and a few rarer and better-arranged paintings that were only waiting the choice or the convenience of purchasers.

There was a dark, thunder-like frown on the young man's brow that might well have daunted a less sensitive spirit than the girl possessed whose heart was so closely knit with his own.

Gertrude was at once a very coward and a heroine where that unloving cousin was concerned.

As he at last halted in his fierce course, and stood before her like a very herald of vengeance, she cowered as a guilty, trembling thing, under his hot, fiery gaze.

"So I have discovered you at last. You have scarcely been wary enough to baffle one who has the keen instinct of love to guide him," he said, sternly.

"I do not understand," she faltered.

Poor girl! The words were perhaps enigmatical enough, for a fond delusion might have misinterpreted their meaning.

"My meaning cannot be very difficult to interpret, unless you are utterly lost to the voice of conscience, or rather of blood crying from the very ground," he replied, fiercely. "Gertrude, do you suppose that Hilda is to remain unavenged? Even now the search for her murderer is renewed with fresh impetus, since the thirst for gold is added to that for vengeance. Do you suppose you will escape the keen scent of the lovers of wealth or the worshippers of that angel girl whom you hated for her very perfectness?"

"I?" she faltered; "I hate Hilda?"

"Yes; did you not envy her with a mean and base jealousy of her gifts that led you to that fearful deed? Did you not cunningly attempt to conceal that baleful, fiendlike passion, and even to feign a horror of my more open and irresistible ravings? Girl, be assured that you will not enjoy this immunity from punishment long. I tell you, if it would avail

for that purpose for me to avow my own complicity in the deed, I could almost meet death myself to ensure your condemnation!"

Gertrude shivered as if an ice blast had passed over her at the sharp, hissing words.

"Rupert, Rupert! may Heaven forgive you, for you are not responsible for what you say in your present mood," she murmured, sinking on the floor in the crouching helplessness of an Oriental slave.

"Had you mercy in your heart or your deeds when you could work that terrible ruin?" he returned, sternly. "Why should I listen to you?"

"Then you—you can believe, can declare me guilty?" she said, with a momentary flash of indignation. "Rupert, others say that—ay, and believe it—of you. Should you not remember those dreadful proofs, which so nearly brought you to condemnation, when you give such credence to such evidence as is against me?"

"Ay, and do you not know the verdict that connected us, Gertrude Mugrave, and in which your own tacit confession was considered as one proof that another and stronger hand than yours did the deed? In one sense they were right. There were but two who had any cause to feel those deadly passions that madden the calmest. I was tortured to the very verge of insanity by the loss of her I worshipped, and you—you hated her from far lower motives because she was prosperous and beautiful and loved, base viper that you were, nestling in her innocent bosom from your very childhood as an adopted sister."

"Because she was beautiful and loved?" repeated the girl, dreamily. "Well, yes, perhaps it was so."

"You confess it! You have at least that poor grace," he exclaimed, bitterly. "Well, and what then? Go on. What more can your conscience dictate?"

"Nothing," she said, sadly, "nothing."

"Then you are hardened in sin, and deserve no mercy," he returned. "Mark me, Gertrude; I shall not rest with that foul blot staining my very hands and name like a mark for men's loathing and contempt. I reek little of the ruin that has blighted my every prospect, but at least I will clear myself from guilt by obtaining vengeance for the deed. Unless you will humble yourself in the dust before me, and confess all—all which will clear me in my own eyes and that of my fellow men—I will bring it home to you, even at the very cost of my own life!"

Gertrude sprang to her feet, and regarded him with a strange flash of something that might be anger or scorn or fear, so agonized and yet so proud was the gleam in her pale face.

"Rupert, Rupert!" she repeated, in rapid, passionate tones, "do not goad me too far, lest I break the vow I have imposed on myself, and declare my own guilt or innocence, which I have vowed not to speak till this mystery is solved by other means."

"You would say this—you would shield yourself behind this convenient vow?" he said, sternly.

"I will not break it, if human strength can bear the burden," she replied, wearily, as if the excitement had well nigh exhausted her powers. "You say it must be one of us two. Then you can need but your own conscience to decide between us."

He shrank, as it seemed, beneath the patient but calm dignity that pervaded the girl's slight figure as she uttered these last words.

"I was perhaps sinful in my unbridled wrath," he said; "but for aught else, could my own life have brought back hers, it should have been freely, gladly given—a hundred deaths would I have died for her!"

"Poor Rupert! And you loved her so much," burst from the girl's lips.

"Is it for you to taunt me with that—to degrade me with your pity?" he returned, fiercely. "No, it was not for that I came, guided by the publicity which necessity or vanity has given to your work. Pity that so much talent should not dwell in a more spotless spirit," he added, as if musingly.

Then he went on, warned by her tortured look and gesture that he must beware of carrying his purpose too far.

"I came," he said, "to give you a fair warning of my intentions, and of the danger that surrounds you, even while I despise my own weakness in so doing. Do you know that Hilda's father is dead, and that his will has proved but too clearly that her death-stroke was his?"

"Poor uncle!—poor, poor Hilda!" whispered the girl. "And the will?"

"Insures the discovery of the murderer, if there is power in gold or in wit. The agent in the discovery will inherit the broad lands that should have gone to the murdered daughter of the wealthy Eldred Mugrave. Is not that enough stimulus to make the criminal tremble?"

She did whiten to the very lips, and her tongue seemed to move within her parched mouth, though no words came that could be audible to the ears.

"It is a dreadful thing—oh, most fearful!" she murmured. "What can be the end?"

"You know all now," resumed Rupert, more calmly, "and, though I have no power to drag you from your concealment and declare you guilty, I warn you that I will not shelter you, or fail in my stern purpose, at any cost."

"And enjoy the reward," she thought, though she crushed back the words—ay, and the very idea—which an over-trying spirit had induced.

Passionate, unjust, bitter as he might be—guilty even of a yet darker crime—she loved him still, with all her girl's fresh, her woman's intense love.

But such unworthy baseness should have at once destroyed—seared—her deep, worshipping affection, and left her heart void and desolate.

"What do you mean?" she asked, calmly. "Would you betray my retreat—give me to the officers of justice—condemn me to a felon's cell? Be it so; I am ready, but for one thing."

"And that?" he asked, inquiringly.

"Rupert, I might be forced to reveal what I would rather die than speak. In mercy to us both, let this fearful secret remain buried in Hilda's grave!"

"Then you must place it beyond my power," he said, hoarsely; "I cannot—I will not answer for myself, or promise mercy to—"

But even as he was uttering the words, and while Gertrude's eager gaze was drinking in the slender comfort which his agitated features afforded—white she read in that struggling emotion the contest between passion and sympathy—the door opened, and Bernard Thorne appeared.

The artist stared, dark and lowering, at the visitor, whose presence had caused his jealous anger.

"May I ask an explanation of this, Miss Lindsay?" he said, turning to Gertrude with a frown, which her pale features might well have softened. "I scarcely thought you received visitors in the absence of the master of the house. If it is on business, as your presence in my studio would imply, it would have been more respectful to have waited my return for this person's admittance."

"I—that is this gentleman saw the pictures at the Academy," stammered Gertrude, in terror for Rupert rather than herself.

"Yes, and I presume recognised more than one portrait in them," returned Bernard, significantly. "However, they are not for sale, at present, and, if that is his errand, the interview may be at once terminated."

"Spare yourself and me the degradation of any farther falsehood, Gertrude," said Rupert, sternly. "Mr. Thorne, I know not how much you know of this young lady's position or story, but, as her relative, I will not be an abettor in any imposition on your credulity. She is a fugitive from her home, under the ban of her family, unworthy of any honourable man's protection—if, indeed, her presence here does not prove she has fallen to yet deeper degradation."

The crimson flood tided over Gertrude's delicate features, and she sprang up as if struck by a bullet, at the words. Then she sank down again, in an agony of grief and shame.

"Oh, Rupert, Rupert!" she murmured, burying her face in her clasped hands, "can it be possible that such cruelty can be in your heart?"

Mr. Thorne perhaps did not hear the words, and Rupert only guessed them from the mute reproach which that indignant flash had darted from her eyes.

"Pray have you come to remove this young lady, sir, and, in that case, what right can you prove to her custody?" asked Bernard, placing himself between the shrinking girl and her accuser.

"I have come to warn her, and I repeat the warning in your presence, that she may be discovered and dragged from your benevolent protection by a power which will need little evidence as to its right, Mr. Thorne. Justice will claim a criminal, wherever guilt exists, and in whatever sex. If you would avoid public scandal on your name I would counsel you to discard so doubtful a protégée."

"And her crime?" asked Bernard, calmly. "At least I should know its nature."

Gertrude's hands fell unconsciously from her face, as she hung breathlessly on Rupert's next words.

"What if it were murder?" came hissing on the silence.

Bernard Thorne laughed scornfully.

"Leave the room, and my house, sir, if you are wise," he said, sternly. "You have volunteered advice to me; I will give counsel to you in my turn. You will do well to save yourself the disgrace of being expelled from this house by at once obeying my command!"

He pointed significantly to the door.

"You charge me with falsehood then?" exclaimed excited young man. "Ask that guilty minion, who the has sunk so low as to add degradation to crime, ask her whether I am not speaking truth. She dare not deny the charge."

Gertrude looked wildly from one to the other of those torturing persecutors, in neither of whom could she find hope or refuge, and her spirit rose, like a tender hind at bay with the hunters.

"Enough of this," she said, faintly. "I will act for myself. Go, go! I cannot endure more! Afterwards, afterwards!" she gasped, turning to Bernard

Thorne, who had drawn nearer to her as he marked the corpse-like pallor which gave additional glitter to her burning eyes.

"Go, sir, at once!" thundered Bernard. "I wish no more base betrayal of a helpless girl. I shall learn the truth from her own lips, not yours! Go, I say! Would you kill her on the spot?"

Even as he spoke Gertrude sank, fainting and powerless, in his extended arms.

Rupert gave one glance of unutterable scorn as he slowly turned to the door.

"I leave her in a creditable place," he said, fiercely; "in the arms of her protector. But we shall see whether they will have power to avert her doom."

He strode from the room in a tempest of contending passions that he would certainly have refused to confess to himself.

There had been a bitter rage at the interference of Bernard Thorne on his cousin's behalf—a maddening pang at the sight of her in his arms, which did not altogether belong to scorn and wrath at her guilt, or Thorne's firm doubts. But as yet he was sensible of nothing but a boiling and feverish thirst for vengeance on the hardened, unyielding relative of his lost, his worshipped Hilda!

"Gertrude, look up—he has gone!—calm yourself!" said Bernard Thorne, raising her in his arms, and, lavishly perhaps, clasping her in his heart more firmly than the mere support required.

She gazed feebly up, more awakened by that unwelcome caress than his words.

"Let me go; I am well now; only I must be at peace for a little—a very little—while, please."

He did not reply, save by bearing her from the studio to an opposite apartment, which was her own especial sitting-room, and, placing her on a sofa, he hurried away for some reviving stimulant, with which he returned almost before the girl was aware of his absence.

"Drink this," he said, gently, holding the wine to her lips. "Nay, I insist on it," he added as she turned shudderingly from the draught.

She looked up, only half comprehending his words, but the instinct of feminine obedience prevailed, and she drank up the strong cordial to the very bottom of the glass.

"There, now you are better," he said as he laid her head again on the pillow of the sofa. "Now rest; I will not speak to you yet."

He sat down near her, and for perhaps some ten minutes there was silence in the apartment—hushed, strange silence. Then Gertrude suddenly opened her eyes.

"I must go," she said. "You would not hinder me now, after that scene?"

"Not if I go with you, and your safety necessitates such a course," he answered, firmly.

"You with me?" she repeated. "No, no; I must be alone, as a suspected criminal should be."

Bernard Thorne grasped her hand, and almost brought a cry to her lips from the unconscious force of the pressure.

"Listen, Gertrude," he said, in a low, agitated voice, "I would not hear your crime—or rather the charge against you—from the lips of you cowardly ruffian; it was simply incredible that one so delicate, so gentle, should be accused of such guilt. And I do not even ask you now whether you are guilty or innocent—I do not desire to know aught but that I love you, that I will shield you from every danger, every disgrace, with my protecting affection, as a sure shield. Again I say, be my wife, Gertrude, my cherished wife, and at once, as danger can come to divide us from each other, I have enough for at least our simple wants in other lands, where you will be safe and unknown. Gertrude, come with me, where safety, happiness, love, shall make you forget all this dreadful misery."

There was inexpressible tenderness in his voice and look, and as he held her hand he drew it, as it were, within his clasp, till it well nigh touched his heart, and the girl could perceive its heavy beating as he waited for her reply.

"Speak, Gertrude, will you consent?" he repeated, anxiously bending down his head for her next word.

It came at last—distinct, though low.

"No," she said; "no. It cannot be. Do not ask it. I am accused—disgraced—unworthy to be the wife of any man."

"Gertrude, you are innocent. I believe it, I am sure of it in my heart of heart. It is some foul conspiracy that has driven you to this exile," he exclaimed, passionately.

"I do not say it. I do not deny my guilt," she said, calmly.

"Then I will take you to my heart whether guilty or innocent," said Bernard, impetuously. "Only say that you will love me, be true to me, and it shall be enough."

"I do not, I cannot love you," she said—"at least,

not as you wish; and my lips shall never utter false vows."

"You will learn to do so—you cannot resist my love!" he murmured.

"I cannot—I never can, and I never will wed with-out it, even were I stainless and happy as I once was," she said, her strength returning, as it seemed, with his impetuous importunity.

He drew back for a minute. His eyes wandered restlessly round the room, as if seeking something, till at length they fell on some rough studies which had preceded the completion of Gertrude's academy picture.

He sprang up, and walked hurriedly towards them, then returned to the couch with a lowering brow.

"I see it now," he said, gloomily; "I can recognise that fellow's hated features in your painting, Gertrude. They must have been printed on your heart of heart. Tell me, do you love him?"

The last words were hissed as it were from the very bottom of his labouring chest, and Gertrude could guess the agony that beat within.

"How can I love him? You saw his hatred, his bitterness!" she murmured. "I have him as my deadliest foe."

"Well, that is no answer," he said, sternly. "You are not wont to evade the truth. I will be replied to. It is my right. Speak. Do you love him?"

"I refuse to answer so wild a question," she returned, striving to collect her powers. "It is enough that he detests me, persecutes me, that the whole misery of my life comes from him, and that I shall never meet him more save as my enemy."

He looked steadily at her as if reading her very soul.

"Gertrude, I am no young, inexperienced lover to be thus deceived, and I have loved and studied you too deeply not to comprehend your nature. I do not credit your words. You are capable of a mad devotion that would cast itself beneath the very wheels of the car that hold him you love. It is my deep, my fatal belief that you cherish such devotion for that hard, relentless, base villain."

He had worked himself into a very pitch of fury as he went on, and Gertrude trembled rather for Rupert than for herself.

"Now, mark me," he went on; "it shall rest with you whether you will purchase your safety and his by complying with my proposal, or make me first your enemy and then his."

"His?" she said, scornfully; "that is a useless threat. You have no power over him or his. For me it matters little whether my fate be hastened by a little—my wretched life more utterly destroyed than it is now."

"Then you defy me?" he said, hoarsely.

"Not defy you," she answered, in sweet tones that were musical and gentle after his harsh, croaking accents. "You have been good and kind—you have protected and sheltered me. Even now you would trust me—love me through all. Can you believe I am insensible to this? But I am resolved I will never—I can never do as you wish."

"And this is your final decision?" he said, gloomily.

"It is. Please do not urge me farther. I am not able to bear it," she added, faintly.

"It is well," he replied, bitterly. "I am not to be used as your tool, then cast aside while you are giving your whole life and soul for one who hates and persecutes you to the very death. I will but give you a few hours to decide finally, then I plead no more. From that time you change a devoted friend, a worshipping lover, to an enemy, implacable as that base foe who would ruin your every hope and peace. Mind you, girl, I am twice his age, but time has deepened, not dulled, my passions. You will find me more inexorable, more dangerous than one in the heat and heyday of life."

He turned to leave the room as he spoke, but suddenly returned towards the couch.

"I shall not see you again to-day," he said. "You shall be left in perfect quiet, such as you may, I can believe, require to rest and think; ere I ask your last reply. But, mind me, from that hour no prayers or tears or suffering of yours shall turn me from my purpose. Your enemy and your lover will be in accord then, and you must prepare to meet the fate with which your amiable relative threatened you. Till this hour to-morrow I will not attempt to enter your presence. Use the interval wisely, if you are not madly bent on your own destruction."

CHAPTER XXIX.

The hour is come—the spell is past—
Far, far from these, my only love—
Youth's earliest hope and manhood's last,
My darkened spirit turns to love.

"Mr. Dacre, is it true?" Will Rose Mount be closed?" asked Madeline Cleveland, with compressed lips and a forced composure of Philip, whose trusteeship was now fully and legally completed.

The young man gazed wistfully on the restless, glittering eyes that bore so troubled an air, as this question was asked, and his reply was slow and hesitating.

"Madeline, what can I say? There is no alternative—yet, what will you do? Idiot that he was, that revengeful old man, to leave you thus helpless, when so small a portion of his wealth would have sufficed to place you in comfort."

"I could not have accepted it—no, never!" she said, shuddering. "But it matters not. I can take care of myself, as I did in other days—only, only, it is different now."

Again a deep sigh thrilled through her frame. "Forgive me," said Philip, gently, "if I venture to intrude on your confidence, though I have no seeming right to ask it at your hands, Madeline. Is it that you still love Aubrey Lestrange—that it costs you so much to sever the tie between you—which makes you speak thus?"

She shook her head with sad earnestness in her thoughtful countenance.

"No," she said; "terrible as the shock has been that has rooted up as it were the love I once bore your friend, I can scarcely regret being undeceived from my dreams. It is not that which burdens my heart, poisons my life, paralyzes my every energy. There is a deeper and far more real incubus on me than disappointed love, Mr. Dacre, even though it has ruined my name and blighted my whole fate."

"What is it? May I not share your confidence, if I may not hope to remove your trouble?" he asked, softly.

"No, no. The wretched secret must go down to the grave with me," she said, "though it influences each feeling and action of my life. Do not ask more; I cannot answer you."

Philip was silent, though his heart throbbed tumultuously.

Strange that he should dread the giving offence or chilling the confidence of a tiny being whose antecedents were so obscure and questionable, and fortunes so desperate, yet his next words were spoken with as much timid and respectful deference as if she had been a titled heiress.

"Madeline, pardon me; believe in my sincerity when I trust you as entirely. I would not be treacherous to a friend, still less would I venture one shadow of insult to a woman I honour like yourself. But," and his voice faltered, "but, Madeline, I know—I believe that you speak truly when you say you have disavowed Aubrey Lestrange from your heart, and that he will have no more place there. I am doing him no wrong, no injustice, then, when I confess to you how strangely, how passionately I have learned to regard you, Madeline, as the dearest interest, the most absorbing attraction in life for me."

She started, and her breath came and went painfully.

"This to me!" she said; "to me! Are you true or false in your professions, Mr. Dacre? Is it a willful insult? or can it be that you so earnestly misinterpret my real position and feelings?"

He looked at her with a startled frown on his brow.

"Can you think so ill of me?" he said, "as to imagine such a thing possible as that I could venture to insult one like you, alone and helpless, save in your own brave spirit and truth?"

"I never thought it possible that such feelings could ever occur to you, could be in your heart. You seemed so different, so unlike such weakness—especially for one like me," she murmured, dreamily.

"It is because you are what you are that I ever did, ever could entertain such sentiments," he replied, earnestly. "Listen, Madeline, for I am but pouring out long-pent-up feelings and hopes and fears to you, which never would have been spoken to mortal ear save your own. You say truly that I seem hard, unlikely to display the weakness, as you call it, of love; and so I am. I have been cynical, sharp, selfish, if you will; my early youth passed without one such dream. I aspired at all that belonged to the passion I had never felt, and believed it base and interested. It was that which made me feel and act what seems to me now a villain's part where you were concerned, Madeline. I believed that you were but a heartless, coquettish woman, who had seized at a wealthy prey, and would be content if you could but keep it for your own in money or in advantage, never caring for fame or love. I counselled Aubrey accordingly. I came to you with that belief; but when I saw you—when I found your real character—I saw that you were no ordinary woman, and that Lestrange was incapable of appreciating you as you deserved."

He paused.

Madeline's eyes were fixed on him as if she was listening to a verdict of life and death, and as he stopped she only murmured:

"Go on; quick, quick—and the truth, mind!"

"It is the heart's truth, Madeline," he said, fervently,

"and such as should never be heard by human being but yourself. That passed, and I began to read you aright. I saw that you had a brave, determined spirit, a generous nature, a quick intellect—even before that frightful tragedy was enacted that tested your real powers so terribly. I know that Aubrey Lestrange must have deceived you cruelly to induce you to—to—"

"Act the part I did, you would say," she interrupted. "You are right, Mr. Dacre; and it is for that I have listened to you, while I yet knew it was a useless pain for you and for me. I cannot even dream of such ties as you propose for me, for either I am the wife of Aubrey Lestrange in the sight of Heaven, if not of man, or I am unworthy to be yours. No, no; I will not even speak of such an impossibility," she added, impatiently, as if dreading to permit herself to even listen farther to his tempting prayer.

"Where it is involuntary there is no sin; where there is no sin there is no shame," he replied, earnestly. "If I acquit you of all wrong, if I am content to take you for my own, my honoured wife, you can need naught else, except your own power to love, to be happy with me, to fulfil your part in such a compact. Can you do this, Madeline?"

A murmur rose to her lips that sounded very like a "Yes—oh, yes."

But ere it had reached the air on which it came she seemed to recover herself with a sudden recoil from the bending attitude which had expressed a hopeful thoughtfulness in her companion.

"It is no question of will or of possibility, Mr. Dacre," she said, firmly. "I do you justice—indeed I do," she added, with bright drops scarcely repressed from her large eyes. "I know you mean kindly and well—that your offer is in all generosity and truth—but it would degrade me in my own eyes were I to confess myself willing to become the dishonoured wife of an honourable man."

"If it were not for this—if your relation to Aubrey Lestrange did not exist, or were broken—what then?" he asked, anxiously.

"It is useless to speak of what never can be, Mr. Dacre. Be satisfied that I am grateful to you, that I believe you to be my true—my only friend, and that you have cast one gleam of sunshine over the darkness of my life. If you respect me, if you can comprehend my meaning, you will not urge your suit farther."

Philip Dacre had a cynical-cruel hardness in his nature that had never yet yielded or softened to man or woman either. But this strange girl, with her mingling of strength and softness, of real virtue and apparent vice, of passion and self-control, exercised a spell on him that he could not resist.

"It may be that you are right," he said, reluctantly. "Yet it is strange that one so lonely should dwell on the opinions of the world as her guide. Still," he added as a reproachful glance warned him of his injustice, "I am not so case-hardened, so steeped in the world's code of morals, as to be insensible to your nobility of soul. And, Madeline, it may be that your example may inspire me with a higher belief in woman's disinterested purity of nature than has ever yet entered my soul. Yet it is at the cost of happiness, for I can never love again—never!"

There was a pause for some moments.

Even the stern nature of Philip Dacre was moved and shaken to the very centre by a decision which yet he could not even wish to shake.

At last he spoke, in a more measured and constrained tone:

"Madeline, what can you do? What can be arranged for you?" he said, in a subdued voice.

She smiled with a bitter sadness.

"It is a very secondary consideration," she said. "There is always means of obtaining a livelihood in this world, I suppose, and at the worst I have one resource that will not fail me," she added, with a gesture that somewhat alarmed her eager companion in its apparent wildness.

"What is that, Madeline? Surely you would not be so—so infatuated? Surely it were better to accept aid than—"

"Oh, do not fear," she returned, coolly, a slight look of contempt coming on her beautiful features. "I do not intend to commit suicide, Mr. Dacre. I am not quite such a coward as that. No, what I alluded to was a much more common-place resource, a legacy, or rather a memorial that has accompanied me from my very childhood. Do you not remember the diamonds that Mr. Lestrange demanded from me?"

"But, surely, they were not your own?" asked Philip, in astonishment.

"Not altogether—that is, the chief part of the suite were presents from him, and as such I delivered them back, as you know, to the bridegroom elect of Miss Magrave," she replied, with a bitter accent on

the words. "But there was one jewel among them that was only his inasmuch as he had paid for its renewal," she added, more quietly. "There was a locket, with a slender chain of brilliants, that had hung round my neck from the earliest time I can remember, though it was not till I knew Aubrey that I ever guessed its value. I had worn it as a girlish ornament, which was placed there by the caprice of some fond and foolish nurse, never dreaming that it might one day become my sustenance and my refuge."

"Did you give that to Lestrange among the other jewels?" asked Dacre, in astonishment.

"Not the locket," she said, "only the chain, and, to speak truth, in the agitation of the dreadful discovery you revealed to me I scarcely remembered that it was among the gems he demanded."

"When he returned them was it there?" asked Philip, sharply.

"Yes, and as my own property I retained it," she answered, calmly. "For the rest, I bade him keep the gew-gaws with which he had thought to bribe his victim and slave."

"And he consented to this generous release?" said Philip, eagerly.

"He had no alternative. He knew well that I was not one to be trifled with. And," she added, in a lower tone, "the secret which burdens my heart, and will perhaps smite me to the grave, gives me a terrible power—the power of despair!"

"Madeline, then it is as I suspected," he exclaimed, suddenly. "There is something in your heart that is gnawing its life springs, some secret which brings far more agony to you than even your own deep wrongs. Be entreated by me, Madeline. You are the only woman I ever loved—ever can love! Will you not trust me with this mystery? Let me share with you the burden."

"If it were guilt?" she said, in a low voice, "if it were guilt that thus weighs me down to the very dust? Remember the terms of Mr. Magrave's will. Would you win wealth at the price it demands?"

For a brief instant Philip recoiled, and his startled glance strove to read the pale face that did not blench beneath his gaze, though an indescribable anguish passed like a spasm over its features during his momentary pause of doubt.

"No," he returned, firmly. "Never! I am no bloodhound, and were the unwelcome knowledge to come to me unbidden I would fling away the wealth it would procure as an unhallowed possession. But, Madeline, could it be that I suspected that it were possible you even could have dreamed of such a deed, I would throw up the trust I accepted at your behest, and wash my hands of all such wretched responsibility."

"And what then?" she asked, simply.

"I would take you to my heart even then," he said. "Fly with you to other lands, and we would strive to wash out the crime by tears and penitence and love! Madeline, believe me, there are no bounds to the love of a stern nature like mine. It is all unlike that of softer and more impressionable tempers."

Tears were flowing down her cheeks now.

"You are good and noble," she said, "different from what I believed you—different from all I have yet met in this weary world. But it cannot be. I would not take advantage of your generosity, even if it were possible on my own account to accept the unselfish offer. At least," she added, a bright flash beaming through her deep sadness, "at least, you have softened the crust that was fast gathering over my heart—you have given me one sweet memory to mingle with the very gall of bitterness in my spirit! I know now that one human being has loved me from truer motives than the low passions of his nature."

As she spoke she rose from the chair in which she had been nestling as it were among its cushions for support and shelter, and was gliding past the spot where Philip Dacre stood gloomily resting against the recess of the bay window where she had sat.

But he caught her hand in his as she accomplished the purpose, and pressed it fervently to his lips.

"Heaven bless you, Madeline," he said, in a broken voice. "I will never lose sight of you—never cease to watch over you—till you are in safety and peace. Strange that one whom I believed lost to honour and purity should teach me how a true woman can suffer and be strong. Stay," he said, solemnly. "I am from this instant vowed to live for you, though apart from you. And I would seal the compact in all sacred purity on your brow."

He stooped as he spoke, and pressed his lips on the girl's white, smooth forehead with a grave earnestness that bore little of lover's passion in its respectful touch. And Madeline knew it, and did not resist the freedom whose purport she understood; but as she raised her bent head she uttered a faint scream of terror.

"What is it?" said Philip. "Surely you do not fear, you do not misunderstand me, Madeline?"

"No, no, no," she said, hurriedly; "but I saw him,

Aubrey, pass the window. He is fearful in his revenge if it is excited."

Philip had not time to reply when the hasty stride of steps was heard in the hall, and Aubrey burst passionately into the room.

"So this is your friendship, scoundrel!" he exclaimed, fiercely, glaring on the pair. "You abuse my confidence, my trust, to betray me with the woman to whose love and faith I have the sole right—take the consequences, that's all."

Ere the young man he addressed could move from the spot Aubrey uplifted the cane he carried, and in an instant it would have descended on Philip's shoulders. But Madeline with a quick bound placed herself between, and it fell in all its violence on the arm she raised to catch the impromptu weapon.

She staggered under the weight of the blow, and would have fallen to the ground had not Dacre caught her as she reeled towards the large bay window, whose contact might have been fatal to her very life.

"Give her to me, villain. It is all your base treachery!" exclaimed Aubrey, awe struck, and in an instant it would have descended on Philip's shoulders.

But Madeline prevented further altercation by raising herself from Philip's support, though the pallid look of suffering on her face proved how much the effort cost her.

"Peace, Aubrey LeStrange," she said, scornfully. "Are you mad to risk the shedding of more blood, or increase my wrongs, and my resentment? Look here?"

She bared her arm, whose whiteness was even increased by the contrast of the deep mourning sleeve she wore, and showed the bruised spot, where the skin had given way, and large drops of blood were rising through the wound.

"I did not mean it. It was your own fault, and that rascal's," he said, glancing sullenly at Philip Dacre, who was about to speak, but Madeline interposed.

"No, no. Leave it to me," she said, shuddering. "I cannot endure more violence, and I at least can prevent injustice to one who little deserves it. Mr. Dacre, I entreat you to leave us for a few moments, and waive your insulted and just indignation till I have used my influence in this matter. For my sake as a woman, who already owes you much," she added, calmly, "I ask this favour at your hands."

Philip hesitated for a moment. "I dare not leave you," he said. "It were unmanly of me to let you be without protection." "Oh, I am safe," she returned, bitterly. "And you can be within call. I shall summon you presently."

Dacre yielded to her looks rather than her words, and left the room.

"This to my face, minion!" thundered Aubrey as the door closed. "You dare speak thus, before the man you called husband a few brief months since."

"Before the man whom I call husband still, unless I can satisfy myself that the ceremony that induced it was null and void," she said, firmly. "Aubrey, that doubt is your safeguard in more ways than one, so long as you do not push me to unbearable extremity."

"I do not understand you," he faltered. "Perhaps not, yet methinks there is that on your conscience that might enlighten you," returned the girl, significantly. "A wife may have many reasons for not dragging her husband's sins and errors before the world. Nor, I believe, is she always allowed to do so," she added, with a bitter smile.

"Madeline, you are enraging," exclaimed Aubrey, wildly. "Am I to see another man caress you before my very eyes, hear you praise and defend him, suffer for him, yet feel patient and submissive before the infamy it bespeaks?"

"Peace, for safety, if not for shame, base man," she returned, proudly. "Is it for you, the betrayer of those who loved you, the double villain, to dare to speak of wrongs? Is it that you are incapable of believing in the truth or generosity of others which makes your heart so full of venom and of suspicion? Philip Dacre is incapable of the treachery you believe. I have sworn never to be the wife of mortal man while you live. Either I am your wife and cannot belong to another, or I am a degraded creature, unworthy of being the wife of an honourable man. He—he knows it, and the caress you saw was but a pledge of the friendship and the aid which are all I can ever accept from him."

"I do not choose it; have from me all that you want—I will not brook the interference of others," said Aubrey, gloomily.

"Never," she said, "never will I accept aught at your hands, Aubrey. But mark me, if any harm come to Philip Dacre from your agency, or your own violence, I declare to you that all shall be exposed, all—all, Aubrey—and without concealment or hesitation. There has been enough of such terrible tragedy, and

not one drop of blood shall be shed more, on my account, that will not be avenged."

He cowered beneath her words and look, though he strove to preserve a calm defiance in his mien.

"Well, I will not doubt you, Madeline," he said, with a questioning, half-terrified look; "though of course it did seem very suspicious, I am ready to accept your explanation."

"Be it so," she said, walking to the door, and speaking Philip's name in a faint accent. "Mr. Dacre," she said, feebly. "Mr. LeStrange confesses his wrong, and has pledged his word to me not to retain any idea of violence or resentment to one so perfectly innocent and honourable. I do not ask you to seal the compact by the usual grasp of hands, but I will write it, and he shall sign it in the most appropriate and certain ink."

She walked to the writing-table, dashed off a few lines, then, dipping the pen in the blood that still oozed from her arm, gave it to Aubrey, with a look that ensured his obedience to the strange and thrilling behest.

(To be continued.)

THE GIPSY'S ORDEAL.

CHAPTER IV.

He was the mark and glass, copy and book
That fashioned others. 2 Henry IV.

THE incidents narrated in the last chapter confounded and perplexed all the actors who participated therein—for different reasons.

Pietro chanced to be present at the old castle that afternoon by mere accident, and his astonishment at meeting Una, Fineja, and the boy there, together, was indescribable. He listened to the interview between them with a throbbing heart, and quickly decided what he would do.

He hurried the villain into the moaning well without a scruple of remorse—and left his suddenly accomplished work with savage satisfaction.

The false fiend was for ever disposed of. There was no possible chance for his rescue from that tomb! So far Pietro was content, for he had no knowledge or thought that there was any outlet below from the bottom of that howling cavern!

But how came Una there, in company with that rascal? This circumstance annoyed him beyond measure. The naturally jealous disposition of the gipsy was now excited.

He had lost the boy, too, again! He had fled, evidently alarmed—before his eyes, into the forest—he knew not whither. He could nowhere get trace of him afterwards.

Fineja had had the roughest experience of the trio in this instance; but he got away in safety, and he took good care not to run the risk a third time of falling into Pietro's clutches. He felt convinced that Una was in league with Pietro to crush him, and believed that she had betrayed him, spite of his special warnings prior to agreeing to meet her there. He did not approach that woman again for some time.

Una could not understand why Pietro should be in that spot at that time, unless he was in league with her correspondent—whichever he was—and she believed that this was but another act in her lover's course of deception, who had before deceived her, as she knew, full often. Still she sought for the boy.

Carlos knew nothing of the why or wherefore of all this confusion and fun (to him) combined, but he had a good horse under him at the close of the scene, and he did not much care what it was all about. Away he went at a mad gallop through the woods, following his fleeing instructor at top speed, and enjoying the exhilarating ride right earnestly, unmindful of the cause, so that he had the opportunity to enjoy the agreeable excitement of the event.

Thus the three principal parties to this interview were now more estranged from each other than ever.

Una went back to the villa in sorrow, and a few years afterwards she left her home in search of the boy, and never returned—greatly to her father's grief and amazement.

Pietro wandered back in silence and grief to his gipsy camp in the deep forest.

And the months rolled round.

Una heard no more just then from her former correspondent. She went to the castle again one month afterwards, as agreed upon, but she found no one there she knew.

Pietro did not care to approach her now, since he was satisfied that she had seen the boy escape, as he had, across the river. He even suspected that Una might have advised this, too. And it soured him. He was offended. He would not see her again until he had secured the child.

But where was the boy? Who had possession of him now that Fineja, as he thought, was dead? This worried him. But he could learn nothing of

Carlos's whereabouts, though he searched the country round for leagues.

Fineja had now taken care to remove him far beyond the gipsy's reach.

Meantime the tutor of the boy had spent his money. His gold had all gone. Young Carlos got to be past ten years old. He was earning nothing, and Fineja's funds had been exhausted. Something must be done to raise the wherewithal to exist upon. There were two of them, and they wanted bread. Fineja looked about him. He believed it would be useless to apply to Una for more means; and he preferred that Pietro should still think him dead, as no doubt that was his impression. He conceived that he was safer thus, personally—for he entertained no manner of doubt that his late patron, the father of the boy he had stolen, intended his death; and if he should ever meet him again he would surely finish him at sight.

So Fineja removed the boy from place to place, and managed to keep himself and Carlos alive for over two years longer by giving lessons in fencing, sparring, broadsword exercise, the use of the lance and firearms, or minor studies, during which time his best pupil was young Carlos.

At twelve years old the boy was an expert in all the arts of self-defence. As a swordsman he was wonderfully dextrous. Quick-sighted, steady-nerved, strong-limbed, skilful in point, carie, and tierce, he became the master of his instructor, and could beat him in anything he had taught him. Constantly in practice for the love of it, he developed wondrously, and at fourteen or fifteen he found few adversaries who could cope with him in the use of the foil, the broadsword, or the rapier.

He was a magnificent horseman too. No beast he ever mounted, however untamed or untameable, but he could manage him; and he had been sought after at the race-courses, on account of his peculiar skill, judgment, and efficiency as an equestrian.

In all the details of manly gymnastics—where strength of muscle and limb, coolness of nerve, and quickness in execution were required—young Carlos was at the head of the list.

At the Madrid and Toledo bull-baits he was in his element. His uniform temper, quick eye, and quicker hand, his skill, agility, and cunning were notable. These sports were his delight, and the proficiency he attained was commensurate with the joy which animated him in the pursuit of them.

But Carlos studied and read too. He procured every book he could lay his hand on which recounted the exploits of the arena, or which treated of the sports of the ring.

Horse-racing, sparring, boating, gladiatorial prowess, gymnastics, the trapeze, rope-walking, horsemanship, archery—all had their charms for his eye and hand.

And he practised, and studied, and toiled, until he was master of those arts, and found few men and fewer animals that he feared to tackle, in a free circle, in close quarters, or in a hand-to-hand contest.

He sought out competitors whom he met in friendly trials of skill, with foil, or short-sword, or lance—and vanquished them. Finally his fame was known the country through as one of the most adroit and skilful of experts in the singular profession he had chosen.

Amid all this busy and varied career he had passed several months at a time on three occasions at sea, and became a skilful navigator also. And all before he had reached to within three years of his majority.

At thirteen young Carlos had got beyond the farther control of Fineja, whom he did not love, for he had had the opportunity, in his long intercourse with this base man, to study his character.

He knew that his tutor had no valid claims upon him, and he had for some time had it in contemplation to free himself from the association which had become hateful to him. And at last he quietly left him.

They had been sojourning at the coast port of Barcelona for a few months, whither they had strayed, after a long series of wanderings, and thus far with but indifferent pecuniary success.

Young Carlos had been among the shipping there, and had met with a new set of acquaintances among the sailors and smugglers who frequented that locality.

He had heard the fabulous tales they told of adventure in foreign lands, and became imbued with an intense desire to see those wonders for himself, and enjoy the excitement and dangers, and sports which these hardy fellows detailed to him, and in which they professed to have shared. And secretly he now resolved to strike out for himself, and seek his fortune.

One night he joined a party of rollicking young seamen, who took him to a ring performance in Barcelona, where feats of horsemanship and athletic skill were exhibited by a band of strolling players.

His companions were in ecstasies at the daring exploits they witnessed by the bedizened and gaily attired performers, among the most accomplished of whom was a young girl about Carlos's own age, of rare beauty, who rode her spirited and apparently fiery though perfectly trained steed as Carlos had never before seen a female ride, and his admiration being excited he became deeply interested in this young lady.

Towards the close of the exhibition a wild young horse was brought into the ring, and the master of the circle announced that a purse of fifty reals would be awarded to any one among the noisy audience who could ride this fierce-looking colt thrice round the circle successfully—a feat which he knew from long experience could not or never had as yet been accomplished; moreover it served to vary the programme of performances, and invariably to afford an infinity of amusement to the motley crowd, when this exploit was attempted by venturesome tyros who coveted the purse.

The mettlesome beast was mounted first by one and then by another stranger, a peasant, cit, or sailor—who ventured upon the experiment; but all of them, through the rearing, plunging, twisting, or leaping antics of this mad animal, were speedily unseated, tumbled over his head, and thrown sprawling upon the soft sand of the ring, to the intense delight of the excited crowd.

Seven or eight attempts had been made, and each of the adventurers had quickly been grounded, as the well-trained animal, proud of his prowess, flew round the ring with heels in air, leaving rider after rider floundering in the dust, amid the frantic yells and hoots of that excited and merry multitude.

Among the party of young sailors two of the bravest and most agile had tried the experiment, and had been swiftly tumbled heels over head from the colt's back into the centre of the arena, amid roars of laughter and confusion—the actors and gymnasts themselves, male and female, having gathered round the outside entrances to witness this novel sport.

The triumphant nag was about to be withdrawn from the ring, there being apparently no other person who desired to be thrown over his head, when young Carlos, who had watched the manoeuvring with quiet but earnest interest from the outset, stepped lightly down from among the crowd, and offered to compete for the purse.

"You're a brave lad," exclaimed the ring-master; "but you will get hurt. You are a boy—too young to accomplish this thing at present."

"I can try," said Carlos, proudly.

"No, no," replied the manager, leading the horse aside. "Not to-night. Some other time—when you are older. He will break your neck as likely as not."

"Let him try it!" shouted the mob. "Encore! One more! Encore!"

The confusion became so great that the ring-master could not persist in his refusal.

Carlos quickly drew from the pocket of his tunic a long Spanish spur, which he dextrously affixed to the heel of his sandal, to the surprise of the players and the delight of the assemblage, and, turning towards the audience all round, he made a slight obeisance, seized the master's whip-thong, and bounded into the saddle with the words "Let him go!" addressed to the manager; and away the crazy beast went with a rush, amid the shrieks of the rabble.

The colt dashed madly half-round the broad circle, threw his heels fiercely into the air, stopped short, and turned, then reared as straight as a post, and plunged aside, and whirled, and wriggled, and stamped, and stooped and jumped, and floundered, then leaped on again, with head erect and nostrils dilating, still plunging up and down and sideways, with jerks and twisting and rolling indescribable; but all to no avail.

The multitude were frenzied with excitement, and clamorously shouted, "Bravo! bravo! bravissimo!" while the cool and intrepid rider seemed glued to the saddle as he made one round and came flying down the second circuit of the spacious ring!

The beast was not to be easily vanquished, however. He had been trained to unseat his riders at the earliest moment; and, upon the second circuit, he renewed his tearing plunges and turns, and twistings, and leaps, when Carlos struck his keen spur sharply into the excited beast's flank with an earnestness that evidently both astonished and vexed him. This treatment was new to him! He leaped into the air, and onward, with a tremendous bound, then down came the murderous thong upon his flanks, as Carlos held him with a firm hand, and jointly with whip and spur and shouts forced the frenzied animal clear round the circle for the second time, and entered upon his third turn of the ring to complete his triumph, and to win the fifty-real purse, amid terrific shouts of applause from the audience.

Again the beast refused—again he writhed and kicked and reared, but did not turn! Carlos gave him spur and whip, and yelled "Go on!" and the mob took up the shout "Go on!" "Bravo!" while the actors themselves clapped their hands at the courage and wondrous skill of this handsome boy, who, with cheeks all aglow with the exercise and excitement, noted, among the gazers upon his prowess, the sweet face of the little girl who had so charmed him by her performances that night. Driving the rowl into the now angered brute's side, and bringing down this thong sharply right and left across his reeking flanks, he put him to his mettle, and came round for the third time, at a killing pace, amid the shrieks and bravos of the thoroughly tumultuous throng, who so intensely enjoyed the brave boy's triumph.

But he did not halt! Round for the fourth time—a fifth—a sixth circuit he made, at a racing gallop, for the beast had now found his master, and the boy was enjoying the ride immensely.

"Halt! Hold on!" cried the ring-master. "You've won! Don't kill the horse! Halt!"

"Go on!" screamed the crowd. "Bravo! encore! bravo!"

Upon the seventh circuit Carlos wheeled the thoroughly blown beast gallantly into the centre of the ring, sprang easily to the ground, took the purse, doffed his sombrero to the audience, and modestly joined his mates, who received him with open arms.

(To be continued.)

A DARING GAME; OR, NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

CHAPTER I.

SIR HAROLD WYNDE, Baronet, was standing upon the pier-head at Brighton, looking idly seaward, and watching the play of the sunset rays on the waters, the tossing, white-capped waves, and the white sails in the distance against the blue sky.

He was not yet fifty years of age, tall and handsome and stately, with fair complexion, fair hair, and keen, blue eyes, which at times beamed with a warm and genial radiance that seemed to emanate from his soul. The rare nobility of that soul expressed itself in his features.

His commanding intellect betrayed itself in his square, massive brow. His grand nature was patent in every look and smile.

He was a widower with two children, the elder a son, who was a captain in a fine regiment in India, the younger a daughter, still at boarding-school.

He possessed a magnificent estate in Kent, a house in town, and a marine villa, and rejoiced in a clear income of seventy thousand pounds a year.

Titled ladies—to use a well-worn phrase—"set their caps" at him; manoeuvring mamma's smiled upon him; portly papas, with their "quivers full of daughters," and with groaning purses, urged him to dine at their houses or hotels; and widows of every age looked sweetly at him, and thought how divine it would be to be chosen to reign as mistress over the baronet's estate of Hawkhurst.

But Sir Harold went his ways quietly, seeming oblivious of the hopes and schemes of these manoeuvrers. He had had a good wife, and he had no intention of marrying again.

So, as he stood carelessly leaning against the railing on the pier-head, under the gay awning, his thoughts were far away from the gaily dressed promenaders sauntering down the chain pier, or pacing with slow steps to and fro behind him.

The sunset glow slowly faded. The long gray twilight began to fall slowly upon promenaders, beach, chain pier, and waters.

Suddenly in the midst of Sir Harold's reverie, an incident occurred which was the beginning of a chain of events destined to change the whole future course of the baronet's life, and to exercise no slight degree of influence upon the lives of others.

Yet the incident was simple. A little pleasure-boat, occupied by two ladies and a boatman, had been sailing leisurely about the pier-head for some time.

The boatman, one of the ordinary pleasure-boatmen who make a living at Brighton, as at other maritime resorts, by letting their crafts and services to chance customers, had been busy with his sail.

One of the ladies, a hired companion apparently, sat at one side of the boat. The other lady, as evidently the employer, half reclined upon the plush cushions, and an Indian shawl of vivid scarlet lavishly embroidered with gold was thrown carelessly about her figure. One cheek of this lady rested upon her jewelled hand, and her eyes were fixed with a singular intentness, a peculiar speculativeness upon the tall and stalwart figure of Sir Harold Wynde.

There was a world of meaning in that long, furtive gaze, and had the baronet been able to read and comprehend it the tragical history we are about to narrate would never have happened. But he, wrapped in his own thoughts, saw neither the boat nor its occupants.

The little craft crept in quite near to the pier-head—so near as to be but a few rods distant—when the boatman shifted his helm to go about and stand upon the other tack. The small vessel gave a lurch, the wind blowing freshly; the lady with the Indian shawl started up with a shriek; there was an instant of terrible confusion; then the sail-boat had capsized, and her late occupants were struggling in the waters.

In a moment the promenaders of the chain pier had thronged upon the pier-head.

Cries and ejaculations filled the air! No one could comprehend how the accident had occurred, but one man who had been watching the boat averred that the lady with the shawl had deliberately and purposely capsized it.

And this was the actual fact! Sir Harold Wynde was startled from his trance-like musings by the lady's shriek. He looked down upon the waters and beheld the result of the catastrophe.

The boat's sail lay half under water. The boatman had seized the lady's companion, and was clinging to the upturned boat.

The companion had fainted in his arms, and he could not loosen his hold upon her unless he would have her drown before his eyes.

The lady, at a little distance from her companions in peril, tangled in her mass of scarlet and gold drapery, her hat lost, her long hair, trailing on the waves, seemed drowning.

Her peril was imminent. No other boats were near, although one or two were coming up swiftly from a distance.

The lady threw up her white arms with an anguished cry. Her glance sought the thronged pier-head in wild appealing.

Who looking at her would have dreamed that the disaster was part of a well-contrived plan—a trap to catch the unwary baronet?

As she had expected from his well-known chivalrous character, he fell into the trap.

His keen eyes flashed a rapid glance over beach and waters. The lady was likely to drown before help could come from the speeding boats.

Sir Harold pulled off his coat and made a dive into the sea. He was an expert swimmer, and reached the lady as she was sinking. He caught her in his arms, and struck out for the boat.

The lady became a dead weight, and when he reached the capsized craft her head lay back on his breast, her long wet tresses of hair coiled around him, and her pale face was like the face of a dead woman.

Sir Harold clung to the side of the boat opposite that on which the boatman supported his burden. And thus he awaited the coming of the boats.

Among the eager, thronging watchers on the pier-head above was a tall, fair-faced man, with a long, waxed moustache, sinister eyes, and a cynical smile. He alone of the throng seemed unmoved by the tragic incident.

"It was pretty well done," he muttered, under his breath; "a little transparent, perhaps, and a trifle awkward as well, but pretty well done. The baronet fell into the trap too, exactly as was hoped. Your campaign opens finely, my beautiful Octavia. Let us see if the result is to be what we desire. In short, will the baronet be as unsuspecting all the way through?"

Sir Harold certainly was unsuspecting at that moment. The helpless woman in his arms aroused into activity all the chivalry of his chivalric nature. He held her head above the surging waves until the foremost boat had reached him. His burden was the first to be lifted into the rescuing craft; the lady's companion followed; the baronet and the boatman climbing into the boat last, in the order in which they are named.

The capsized boat was righted and its owner took possession of her. The rescuing craft transported the baronet and the two ladies to the beach. The lady companion had recovered her senses and self-possession, but the lady employer lay on the cushions pale and motionless.

On reaching the landing a cab was found to be in waiting, having been summoned by some sympathizing spectator. The companion, uttering protestations of gratitude, entered the vehicle, and her mistress was assisted in after her. The former gathered her employer in her arms, crying out:

"She is dead—she is dead! I have lost my best friend."

"Not so, madam," said Sir Harold, in kindly sympathy. "The lady has only fainted, I think. To what place shall I tell the cabman to drive?"

"To the Albion Hotel. Oh, my poor, poor lady! To die so young! It is terrible!"

Sir Harold made some soothing response, but,

being chilled and wet, did not find it necessary to accompany to their hotel the heroines of the adventure.

It was not until he had had a comfortable bath, and was seated in dry attire in his private parlour, that Sir Harold remembered that he did not know the name of the lady he had served, and that he had not even seen her face distinctly.

The next morning's paper, brought in to him as he sat at his solitary breakfast, contained a glowing account of the previous evening's adventure, under the flaming head line of "Heroic Action," with the sub-line: "Sir Harold Wynde saves a lady's life at the risk of his own."

There followed a highly imaginative description of the lady's adventure, her name being as yet unknown, and a warm eulogy upon Sir Harold's bravery and presence of mind.

The baronet's lip curled as he read impatiently the fulsome article.

He had scarcely finished it when a waiter entered, bringing in upon a silver tray a large, square enveloped letter.

It was addressed to Sir Harold Wynde, was stamped with an unintelligible monogram, and sealed with a dainty device in pale green wax.

As the baronet's only lady correspondent was his daughter at school, and this missive was clearly not from her, he experienced a slight surprise at its reception.

The waiter having departed, Sir Harold cut open the letter with his pocket knife, and glanced over its contents.

They were written upon the daintiest, thickest vellum paper, unlined, and duly tinted and monogrammed, and were as follows:

"Albion Hotel, Tuesday Morning.

"SIR HAROLD WYNDE.—The lady who writes this letter is the lady whom you so gallantly rescued from a death by drowning last evening. I have read the accounts of your daring bravery in the morning's papers, and hasten to offer my grateful thanks for your noble and gallant kindness to an utter stranger. Life has not been so sweet to me that I cling to it, but yet it is very horrible to go in one moment from the glow and heartiness of health and life down to the very gates of death. It was your hand that drew me back at the moment when those gates opened to admit me, and again I bless you—a thousand, thousand times I bless you. Alas that I have to write to you myself! I have neither father, lover, nor husband to rejoice in the life you have saved. I am a widow, and alone in the wide world. Will you not call upon me at my hotel and permit me to thank you far more effectively in person? I shall be waiting for your coming in my private parlour at eleven this morning.

"Gratefully yours,

"OCTAVIA HATHAWAY."

The baronet read the letter again and again. His generous soul was touched by its sorrowful tone.

"A widow, and alone in the world!" he thought. "Poor woman! What sentence could be sadder than that? She is elderly I am sure, and has lost all her children. I do not want to hear her expressions of gratitude, but if I can make the poor soul happier by calling on her I will go."

Accordingly, at eleven o'clock that morning, attired in a gentleman's unexceptionable morning dress, Sir Harold Wynde, having sent up his card, presented himself at the door of Mrs. Hathaway's private parlour at the Albion Hotel, and knocked for admittance.

The door was opened to him by the lady's companion, who greeted him with effusiveness, and begged him to be seated.

She was a tall, angular woman, with sharp features, whose characteristic expression was one of peculiar hardness and severity. Her lips were thin, and were usually compressed. Her eyes were a light gray, furtive and sly, like a cat's eyes. Her pointed chin gave a treacherous cast to her countenance. Her complexion was of a pale, opaque gray; her hair, of a fawn colour, was worn in three puffs on each side of her face, and her dress was of a tint to match her hair. Sir Harold conceived an instinctive aversion to her.

"Mrs. Hathaway?" he said, politely, with interrogative accent.

"No, I am not Mrs. Hathaway," was the reply, in a subdued voice, and the furtive eyes scanned the visitor's face. "I am only Mrs. Hathaway's companion—Mrs. Artress. Mrs. Hathaway has just received your card. She will be out directly."

The words were scarcely spoken when the door of an inner room opened, and Mrs. Hathaway made her appearance.

Sir Harold stood up, bowing.

The lady was by no means the elderly, melancholy personage he had expected to see. She was about thirty years of age, and looked younger. She had a tall, statuesque figure, well rounded and inclined to embonpoint. She carried her head with a certain stateliness. Her hair was dressed with the

inevitable chignon, crimped waves, and long, floating curl, and, despite the monstrosity of the fashion, it was decidedly and undeniably picturesque. Her face, with its clear brunette complexion, liquid black eyes, Grecian nose, low brows, and faultless mouth, was very handsome. There was a fascination in her manners that was felt by the baronet even before she had spoken.

She was not dressed in mourning, and it was probable, therefore, that her widowhood was not of recent beginning.

She was clothed in an exquisitely embroidered morning-dress of white, which trailed on the floor, and was relieved with ornaments of pale pink coral, and a broad coral-coloured sash at her waist.

"This is Mrs. Hathaway, Sir Harold," said the gray-looking companion.

The lady sprang forward after an impulsive fashion, and clasped the baronet's hands in both her own. Her full, ripe lips quivered. Her black eyes flooded with tears. Then, in a broken voice, she thanked her preserver for his gallant conduct on the previous evening, assuring him that her gratitude would outlast her life. Her protestations and gratitude were not overdone, and unsuspecting Sir Harold accepted them as genuine, even while they embarrassed him.

He remained an hour, finding Mrs. Hathaway charming company and thoroughly fascinating. The companion sat apart, silent, busy with embroidery, a mere gray shadow; but her presence gave an easy unconstraint to both the baronet and the lady.

When Sir Harold took his departure, sauntering down to the German Spa, he carried with him the abiding memory of Mrs. Hathaway's handsome brunette face and liquid black eyes, and thought within himself that she was the most charming woman he had met for years.

From that day, throughout the season, the baronet was a frequent visitor at Mrs. Hathaway's private parlour.

The gray companion was always at hand to play propriety, and the tongues of gossip, though busy, had no malevolence in them. Sir Harold had his own horses at Brighton, and placed one at Mrs. Hathaway's disposal.

The widow accepted it, procured a bewitching costume from town, and had daily rides with the baronet. She also drove with him in his open, low carriage, and bowed right and left to her acquaintances upon such occasions with the gracious condescension of a princess.

She sailed with him in his graceful yacht upon day's excursions, her companion always being present, and rumour at length declared that the pair were engaged to be married.

Sir Harold heard the reports, and they set him thinking. The society of Mrs. Hathaway had become necessary to him.

She understood his tastes, studying them with a flattery so delicate that he was pleased without understanding it. She read his favourite books, played his favourite music, and displayed talents of no mean order.

She was fitted to adorn any position, however high, and Sir Harold thought, with a pleasant thrill at his heart, how royally she would reign over his beautiful home.

In short, questioning his own heart, he found that he loved her—not with the youthful ardour with which he had worshipped his dead wife, who would be to him always young, as when he had buried her—but with the passion of later manhood, an exalting, jealous, yearning affection, which gives all and demands all.

With his children far from him, his life had been lonely, and he had known many desolate hours, when he would have given half his wealth for sympathy and love.

"I shall find both in Octavia," he thought, his noble face brightening. "I shall not wrong my children in marrying her. My son will be my heir. My daughter's fortune will not be imperilled by my second marriage. Neva is sixteen, and in two years more will come home. How can I do better for her than to give her a beautiful mother, young enough to win her confidence, old enough to be her guide? Octavia would love my girl, and would be her best chaperone in society, to which Neva must be by-and-by introduced. I should find in Octavia then a mother for my daughter, and a gentle, loving wife and companion for myself. But will she accept me?"

He put the question to the test that very evening. He found the handsome widow alone in her parlour, the gray companion being for once absent, and he told her his love with a tremulous ardour and passion that it would have been the glory of a good woman to have invoked from a nature so grand as Sir Harold's.

The fascinating widow blushed and smiled assent, and her black-tressed head drooped to his shoulder, and Sir Harold clasped her in his arms as his betrothed wife.

With a lover's impetuosity he begged her to marry him at an early day.

She hesitated coyly, although for months she had been striving and praying for this hour, and was finally won to consent to marry him a month thence.

"I am alone in the world, and have no one to consult," she sighed. "I have an old aunt, a perfect miser, who lives in Bloomsbury Square, in London. She will permit me to be married from her house, as I was before. The marriage will have to be very quiet, for she is averse to display and expense."

"However, what she saves will come to me some day, so I need not complain. I shall want to keep Artress with me, Sir Harold. I can see that you don't like her, but she has been a faithful friend to me in all my troubles, and I cannot abandon her when prosperity smiles so splendidly upon me. I may keep her, may I not?"

Thus appealed to, Sir Harold smothered his dislike of the gray companion, and consented that she should become an inmate of his house.

Mrs. Hathaway proceeded to explain the cause of her friendlessness.

She was an orphan, and had early married the Honourable Charles Hathaway, the younger son of a viscount, who had died five years before. The Honourable Charles had been a dissipated spendthrift, and had left his wife this meagre income of some three hundred pounds a year.

Her elegant clothing was, for the most part, relics of better days. As to the expensive style in which she lived, keeping a companion and maid, no one knew, save herself and one other, how she managed to support it. Her name and reputation were unblemished, and the most censorious tongue had nothing to say against her.

Yet she was none the less an unscrupulous, unprincipled adventurer.

This was the woman the noble, gallant baronet proposed to take to his bosom as his wife, to endow with his name and wealth, to make the mother and guide of his pure young daughter. Would the sacrifice of the generous, unsuspecting lover be permitted?

It was permitted. A month later their modest bridal train swept beneath the portals of St. George's Church, Hanover Square.

Sir Harold's son and heir was in India, and his daughter had not been summoned from her boarding-school in Paris. The baronet's tender father soul yearned for his daughter's presence at his second marriage; but Lady Wynde had urged that Neva's studies should not be interrupted, and had begged, as a personal favour, that her meeting with her young step-daughter might be delayed until her ladyship had become used to her new position.

She professed to be timid and shrinking in regard to the meeting with Neva, and Sir Harold, in his passionate love for Octavia, put aside his own wishes, yielding to her request.

But he had written to his daughter, announcing his intended second marriage, and had received in reply a tender, loving letter, full of earnest prayers for his happiness, and expressing the kindest feelings towards the expected step-mother.

The words were spoken that made the strangely assorted pair one flesh.

As the bride arose from her knees the wife of a wealthy baronet, the wearer of a title, the handsome face was lighted by a triumphant glow, her black eyes emitted a singular, exultant gleam, and a conscious triumph pervaded her manner.

She had played the first part of a daring game—and she had won!

As she passed into the vestry to sign the marriage register, leaning proudly upon the arm of her newly made husband, and followed by her few attending personal friends, a man who had witnessed the ceremony from behind a pillar in the church stole out into the square, his face lighted by a lurid smile, his eyes emitting the same peculiar, exultant gleam as the bride's had done.

This man was the tall, fair-haired gentleman, with waxed moustaches, sinister eyes, and cynical smile, who, nearly three months before, had witnessed from the pier-head at Brighton the rescue of Mrs. Hathaway from the sea by Sir Harold Wynde. Now this man muttered:

"The game prospers. Octavia is Lady Wynde. The first act is played. The next requires more time, deliberation, caution. Every move must be considered carefully. We are bound to win the entire game."

CHAPTER II.

SIR HAROLD and Lady Wynde ate their wedding-breakfast in Bloomsbury Square, at the house of Lady Wynde's miserly aunt, Mrs. Hyde. A few of the baronet's choice friends were present.

The absence of Sir Harold's daughter was not especially remarked save by the father, who longed with an anxious yearning to see her face smiling

upon him, and to hear her young voice whispering congratulations upon his second marriage.

Neva had been especially near and dear to him. Her mother had died in her babyhood, and he had been both father and mother to his girl. He had early sent his son to school, but Neva he had kept with him until, a year before, his first wife's relatives had urged him to send her to a "finishing school" at Paris, and he had reluctantly yielded. Not even his passionate love for his bride could overcome or lessen the fatherly love and tenderness of years.

Immediately after the breakfast the newly married pair proceeded to Canterbury by special train. The gray companion and Lady Wynde's maid travelled in one compartment, Sir Harold and his bride in another. The Hawkhurst carriage was in waiting for the bridal pair at the station.

Sir Harold assisted his wife into it, addressed a few kindly words to the old coachman on the box, and entered the vehicle. The gray companion and the maid entered a dog-cart, also in waiting.

Hawkhurst was several miles distant, but the country between it and Canterbury was a charming one, and Lady Wynde found sufficient enjoyment in looking at the handsome seats, the trim hedges, and thrifty hop-gardens, and in wondering if Hawkhurst would realize her expectations. She found indeed more enjoyment in her own speculations than in the society of her husband.

About five o'clock of the afternoon the bridal pair came in sight of the ancestral home of the Wyndes. The top of the low baronche was lowered, and Sir Harold pointed out her future home to his bride with pardonable pride, and she surveyed it with eager eyes.

It was, as we have said, a magnificent estate, divided into numerous farms of goodly size. The home grounds of Hawkhurst proper, including the fields, pastures, meadows, parks, woods, plantations and gardens, comprised about four hundred acres.

The mansion stood upon a ridge of ground some half a mile wide, and was seen from several points at a distance of three or four miles. It was a grand old building of gray-stone, with a long facade, and was three storeys in height.

Its turrets and chimneys were noted for their picturesque. Its carved stone porches, its quaint wide windows, its steep roof, from which pert dormer windows sanely projected, were remarkable for their beauty or oddity.

Despite its age, and its air of grandeur and stateliness, there was a home-like look about the great mansion that Lady Wynde did not fail to perceive at the first glance.

The house was flanked on either side by glass pinnies, grape-houses, hothouses, green-houses, and similar buildings. Farther to the left of the dwelling, beyond the sunny gardens, was the great park, intersected with walks and drives, having a lake somewhere in its umbrageous depths, and herds of fallow-deer browsing on its herbage.

In the rear of the house, built in the form of a quadrangle, of gray-stone, were the handsome stables and offices of various descriptions. The mansion with its dependencies covered a great deal of ground, and presented an imposing appearance.

The house was approached by a shaded drive a half-mile or more in length, which traversed a smooth green lawn dotted here and there with trees. A pair of bronze gates, protected and attended by a picturesque gray-stone lodge, gave ingress to the grounds.

These gates swung open at the approach of Sir Harold Wynde and his bride, and the gate-keeper and his family came out, bowing and smiling, to welcome home the future lady of Hawkhurst. Lady Wynde returned their greetings with graceful condescension, then, as the carriage entered the drive, she fixed her eager eyes upon the long gray facade of the mansion, and said:

"It is beautiful—magnificent!—you never did justice to its grandeur, Harold, in describing Hawkhurst. It is strange that a house so large, and of such architectural pretension, should have such a bright and sunny appearance. The sunlight must flood every room in that glorious front. I should like to live all my days at Hawkhurst!"

"Your dower house will be as pleasant a home as this, although not so pretentious," said Sir Harold, smiling gravely. "It is probable that you, being twenty years my junior, will survive me, Octavia, and therefore I have settled upon you, for your life's use, in your possible widowhood, one of my prettiest places, one which has served for many generations as the residence of the dowager widows of our family."

The glow on Lady Wynde's face faded a little, and her lips slightly compressed themselves, as they were wont to do when she was ill-pleased.

"I have never asked you about your property, Harold," she remarked, "but your wife need be restrained from doing so by no sense of delicacy. I suppose your property is entailed?"

"Hawkhurst is entailed, but it will fall to the female line in case of the dying out of heirs male," replied the baronet, not marking his bride's scarcely suppressed eagerness. "It has belonged to our family from time immemorial, and was a royal grant to one of our ancestors who saved his monarch's life at risk of his own. Thus, at my death, Hawkhurst will go, with the title, to my son. If George should die without issue Hawkhurst—without the title, which is a separate affair—will go to my daughter."

"A weighty inheritance for a girl," remarked Lady Wynde. "And—and if she should die without issue?"

"The estate would go to distant consins of mine," Lady Wynde started. This was evidently an unexpected reply, and she could not repress her looks of disappointment.

"I—I should think your wife would come before your consins," she murmured.

"How little you know about law, Octavia," said the baronet, with a grave, gentle smile. "The property must go to those of our blood. If our union be blessed with children, the eldest of them would inherit Hawkhurst before my consins. But although the law has proclaimed us one flesh yet it does not allow you to become the heir of my entailed property. It is singular even that a daughter is permitted to inherit before male consins, but there was a clause in the royal deed of gift of Hawkhurst to my ancestors that gave the property to females in the direct line, in default of male heirs, but there has never been a female proprietor of the estate. I hope there never may be. I should be sorry to have the old name die out of the old place. But here we are at the house. Welcome home, my beautiful wife!"

The carriage stopped in the porch, and Sir Harold got out and assisted his bride to alight. He drew her arm through his and led her up the lofty flight of stone steps, and in at the arched and open doorway.

The servants were assembled to welcome home their lady, and the baronet uttered the necessary words of introduction and conducted his bride to the drawing-room.

This was an immensely long apartment, with nine wide windows on its eastern side looking out upon gardens and park. Sculptured arches, supported by slender columns of alabaster, relieved the long vista, and curtains depending from them were capable of dividing the grand room into three handsome ones.

The drawing-room was furnished in modern style, and was all gaily, brightness, and beauty. The furniture, of daintiest satin-wood, was upholstered in pale blue silk. The carpet, of softest gray hue, was bordered with blue.

"It is very lovely," commented the bride. "And that is a conservatory at the end? I shall be very happy here, Harold."

"I hope so," was the earnest response. "But let me take you up to your own rooms, Octavia. They have been newly furnished for your occupancy."

He gave her his arm and conducted her out into the wide hall, with its tasseled floor, up the wide marble staircase to a suite of rooms directly over the drawing-room.

This suite comprised sitting-room, bedroom, dressing-room, and bath-room. Their upholstery was of a vivid crimson hue. A faultless taste had guided the selection of the various adornments, and Lady Wynde's eyes kindled with appreciation as she marked the costliness and beauty of everything about her.

"Your trunks have arrived in the waggon, Octavia," said her husband, well pleased with her commendations. "Mrs. Artress and your maid, who came in the dog-cart, have also arrived. Dinner has been ordered at seven. I will leave you to dress. By the way, should you have need of me, my dressing-room adjoins your own."

He went out. Lady Wynde rang for her maid and her gray companion, and dressed for dinner. When her toilet was made the baronet's bride dismissed her maid and came out into her warm-hued sitting-room, where Mrs. Artress sat by a window looking out into the leafy shadows of the park.

"Well?" said the beauty, interrogatively. "What do you think? Have I not been successful?"

"So far, yes," said the grim, sallow-faced companion, raising her light, hay-coloured eyes with a meaning expression. "But the end is not yet. The game, you know, has only fairly begun."

"Yes, I know," said the bride, thoughtfully; "but it has well begun. But hush, Artress. Here comes my happy bedroom."

There was a mocking smile on her lips as she bade Sir Harold enter. The wedded pair had a few minutes' conversation in the sitting-room, her ladyship's companion sitting in the deep window-seat, mute as a shadow, and they then descended to the drawing-room. Mrs. Artress meekly followed. She

remained near Lady Wynde in attendance upon her until after dinner, then went up to her own room, which was in convenient proximity to the apartments of Lady Wynde.

The bride and bridegroom were left to themselves.

The former played a little upon the grand piano, then approached her husband, sitting down beside him upon the same sofa. His noble face beamed love upon her; but her countenance grew hard with speculative thoughts.

"Let me see," said she, speaking with well-assumed lightness. "What were we talking about when we arrived, Harold? Oh, about your property! So, this dear old Hawkhurst will belong to George? What will Neva have?"

"Her mother's fortune, and several estates which are not entailed. Neva will be a very rich woman without Hawkhurst. You also, Octavia, will be handsomely provided for, without detriment to my children."

"Oh, yes, of course," said Lady Wynde. "But if the estates are not entailed which you intend to give to Neva you must leave them to her by will. Have—have you made your will?"

"Yes; but since I have contracted a new marriage I shall have to make a new will. I shall attend to that at my leisure."

Lady Wynde became thoughtful, but did not press the subject. She excused her questionings on the plea of interest in her husband's children, and Sir Harold gave no thought to them.

The days went by; the weeks and months followed. Neva Wynde had not been summoned home, her step-mother finding plenty of excuses for deferring the return of her step-daughter. Perhaps she feared that a pair of keen young eyes, unveiled by glamour, would see how morally hideous she was—how base and scheming, and unworthy of her husband.

Sir Harold's infatuation with his wife deepened as the time wore on. His love for her became a species of worship. All that she did was good in his eyes.

Lady Wynde went into society, visited the first county families, and received them at Hawkhurst. She gave a ball, dancing and dinner parties, and fêtes champêtres without number. She promoted festivities of every sort, and became one of the most popular ladies in the county. She was a leader of fashion too, and withal was so gracious, so circumspect, so full of delicate flattery to every one, that even venomous-tongued gossip had naught but good to say of her. Her position at Hawkhurst was thus firmly established, and she might be called a happy woman.

As the months went on an air of expectancy began to be apparent in her manner. The gray companion shared it, moving with a suppressed eagerness and nervous agitation, as if waiting for something. And that which she waited for came at last. It was one February evening, more than a year after the bride's coming home to Hawkhurst. Outside the night was wild. Within Lady Wynde's dressing-room the fire glowed behind its silvered bars, and its rays danced in bright gleams upon the crimson furniture. The lamps burned with mellow radiance.

In the centre of the room stood the lady of Hawkhurst. She had dismissed her maid, and was surveying her reflection in a full-length mirror with a complacent smile.

She was attired in a long robe of crimson silk, and wore her ruby ornaments. Her neck and arms were bare. Her liquid black eyes were full of light; her face was aglow.

In the midst of her self-admiration her gray companion entered abruptly, bearing in her hand a letter.

Lady Wynde turned towards her with a startled look.

"What have you there, Artress?" she demanded.

"A letter addressed to me," was the reply. "I have read it. I have a question to ask you, Octavia, before I show the letter to you. Sir Harold Wynde adores you. He loads you with gifts. He lays his heart under your feet. You are his world, his life, his very soul. Now I want to ask you—do you love him?"

The ashen eyes shot a piercing glance into the handsome brunette face, but the black eyes met hers boldly, and the full lips curled in a contemptuous smile.

"Love him!" repeated Lady Wynde. "You know I do not. Love him! You know that I love another even as Sir Harold loves me! Love him! Bah!"

The gray woman smiled a strange, mirthless smile.

"It is well," she said. "Now read the letter. The message has come at last!"

Lady Wynde seized the letter eagerly. It contained only these words, without date or signature:

"The time has come to get rid of him! Now!"

(To be continued.)



[THE LATE M.P. FOR THE NORTHERN DIVISION OF THE WEST RIDING.]

SIR FRANCIS CROSSLEY.

The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walks
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven.

Young.
In the feverish race after wealth so characteristic of modern times the faculty of making money is met with far more often than is either the desire or the ability to dispense it well and wisely, yet, happily, in this country, we can boast of a long list of departed worthies the memory of whom is gratefully cherished on account of the beneficence by which their lives were rendered conspicuous. Upon the roll of their names must be inscribed that of Sir Francis Crossley, in whom the town of Halifax most especially has lost one of its most generous and constant benefactors; indeed the premature closing of a useful and honourable career, in its fifty-fifth year, such as that pursued by the honourable baronet cannot fail to elicit profound and universal regret.

The precarious state of health occasioned by droopy and heart disease under which Sir Francis laboured for a lengthened period somewhat prepared his friends for the result which ensued, although a marked improvement, giving rise to hope, was noticeable a short time before his death, which however took place at seven o'clock on the morning of Friday, the 5th of January, at his residence, Belle Vue, Halifax.

Possessed of the honest industry and sturdy independence for which Yorkshiremen are noted, he added to these qualities an earnestness of religious conviction—steadfastly adhering to the principles of Nonconformity imbibed in his early training—which won the esteem and regard of every one who came within his influence.

Francis Crossley was born in October, 1817, and received his education at Heath Grammar School, Halifax. His father, Mr. Francis Crossley, was a carpet weaver of limited means in Halifax, and his mother, born in the same vicinity, was remarkable

for the shrewdness of her intellect and the piety of her life, which latter characteristic doubtless exercised a beneficial influence over the family. She survived her husband many years, and lived to witness the large measure of successes and honours achieved by and bestowed upon her children.

Like other lads at that time, the young Francis became a member of a juvenile debating club that met to discuss matters political and literary. But salutary hard work at his father's trade of carpet-weaving fortunately kept him from becoming a young debater before he had acquired the raw material for forming his judgments, and it was not until he was thirty years of age, at the general election in 1847, that he appeared as a politician before the public. He then had the honour of introducing Mr. Edward Miall, now M.P. for Bradford, to the Halifax constituency. Both he and Mr. Miall, however, either entertained views at that time unacceptable or their influence was insufficient, and Sir H. Edwards was the successful candidate.

Notwithstanding this failure, the vigour and perseverance which he showed in this contest commended him to his own townsmen, and, at the next election, in July, 1852, he was called upon to become a candidate for Halifax along with Sir Charles Wood. His address was of the most "advanced Liberal" type. Religious equality, extended suffrage, no property qualification, improved electoral districts, shorter parliaments, and vote by ballot, were the main articles of his political creed. The election, which took place on the 7th of July, resulted in a decisive victory, his friend Mr. Miall being at the same time returned for Rochdale.

To complete the record of his political life we may add that in 1857, after Lord Palmerston's defeat on the China question, he was again returned for Halifax, which seat he retained until 1859, when he made way for Mr. Stanfeld, also a native of Halifax (now President of the Local Government Board), who desired a seat; that he then became, at the urgent request of the Liberal party, a candidate for the West

Riding, along with Sir John Ramsden, and was returned by a majority of 1,944 over the Hon. J. Stuart Wortley, his competitor; and that in 1863, on the partition of the Riding by the provisions of Mr. Disraeli's Representation of the People Act, he and Lord F. Cavendish were elected without opposition for the North West division, which seat he held until his death.

Sir Francis as a speaker was fluent rather than eloquent, but his homely illustrations when addressing his constituents probably pleased them much better than any attempts at more elaborate and philosophical oratory. He rarely spoke in Parliament, but when he did he was listened to with attention and respect. Profoundly convinced of the justice and prudence of extending popular rights—religiously eager to secure and maintain spiritual equity and freedom—believing it a solemn duty to raise the helpless and strengthen the weak—his votes were given in favour of measures calculated to secure these ends; he supported those politicians who earnestly sought them, and he had his reward in the respect he received for his consistency and the confidence placed in his integrity.

In 1855 he erected twenty-three dwellings near his own house at Belle Vue as residences for as many poor families. They are known as the Francis Crossley Almshouses, are provided with furniture, and their occupants receive a sufficient weekly stipend.

In 1857, on the 14th of August, he presented the town and corporation of Halifax with a public park, laid out by Sir Joseph Paxton, of considerable extent and beauty, on condition that a sum of not less than 315*l.* per annum should be spent upon its proper maintenance. Some years after, in 1866, he placed in the hands of the corporation 6,000*l.* as an endowment, which was sufficient to secure its being handsomely kept in order. The value of this gift was estimated at 40,000*l.* Meanwhile, in 1860, the inhabitants of Halifax erected and had placed in the park a marble statue of its munificent donor.

In 1860 he, along with his brothers John and Joseph, built and endowed the "Crossley Orphan Home and School" on Skircoat Moor, the cost of which was 65,000*l.*

In 1870 Sir Francis offered 10,000*l.* to the governors of the Halifax Infirmary, on condition that a new infirmary should be built on another site, and the old one converted into a Convalescent Hospital. This offer was at first accepted by the governors of the infirmary, a site was purchased, and plans were obtained for a new building; but in consequence of the difficulties in the way of raising the necessary additional funds, the scheme was reluctantly abandoned, and the offer of Sir Francis was withdrawn only a short time ago. In the same year in which this generous proposal was made Sir Francis gave 10,000*l.* to the corporation of Halifax as a loan fund for deserving inhabitants of that town, who might borrow sums from 100*l.* to 300*l.* at 2½ per cent. interest without security, but with the sound and useful proviso that one tenth of the principal should be repaid annually until the obligation was cancelled.

A short time before his death he gave 1,500*l.* towards the New Park Congregational Church at Halifax. He and his brothers supplied the entire cost of the tower and spire of the Square Congregational Chapel, besides being large contributors to the other portions of the building.

Nor were his gifts confined to his own locality. He presented 10,000*l.* to the "Independent Pastors' Rotating Fund," 10,000*l.* to the formation of a "Fund for the Relief of the Widows of Congregational Ministers," and 20,000*l.* to the London Missionary Society.

That he was able to make such magnificent donations was due mainly to the sagacity of himself and his business associates in availing themselves of the most recent discoveries of science and the best appliances of mechanical art. To a keen insight into the value of modern inventions they added a confident boldness in availing themselves of them, often at vast cost. The results proved that their confidence in their judgment was well founded. When to this they added patience in elaborating their mechanical apparatus, energy in directing its operations, enterprise in extending its limits, and rare good fortune in many of their speculations, we have stated sufficient both to explain and to justify their success. Twenty-five years ago the Dean Clough Mills, where their labours have been carried on, were on a comparatively very small scale; they are now the largest in the world—too large indeed had they become to satisfy the conscience of the proprietors, who, by turning the works into a "Limited Liability Company," have given their workpeople, who had assisted them in attaining their success, a share in the profits they realized.

The modesty and utter absence of ostentation which characterized the charitable exertions of the honourable baronet have rendered the numerous instances of his benevolence directed through private channels known to few save the donor and those whom he benefited; but the public memorials of his

beneficence will abundantly serve to perpetuate the honourable distinction attained by Sir Francis Crossley long after those who now deplore his loss have followed him to that bourne whence no traveller e'er returns.

Sir Francis was Deputy-Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire and Justice of the Peace for East Suffolk, and in 1867 was appointed one of the Boundary Commissioners under the Reform Act. In 1845 he married Martha Elizabeth, daughter of the late Henry Brinton, Esq., of Kidderminster, and his only son, Saville Brinton Crossley, born on the 14th of June, 1857, and now in his fifteenth year, succeeds to the baronetcy, which, having been conferred upon his father in 1863 as some recognition of his noble deeds of large-hearted generosity, should be held in remembrance by the successor to it, and constitute an incentive to follow in the footsteps and become a worthy son of that worthy sire to whom might well have been addressed the words of the immortal bard:

There is a kind of character in thy life
That, to the observer, doth thy history
Fully unfold.—Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, them on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do—
Not light them for ourselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth with us 'twere all alike
As if we had them not.—Spirits are not finely

touched,
But to fine issues, nor nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.

THE KING OF THE TRAPPERS.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SINGLE, slight straining of the muscles, and a severe wound, if not death, would have followed.

But even as he was in the act of firing he dropped his weapon to the ground, and continued:

"How can I tell that there's anything worth fighting for, except it might be your miserable life? Where is the girl?"

"Here."

"You say so."

"If the red-man will let her go forth will the pale-face promise that he will not carry her off until he has fairly won her?"

"Well, yes. If you let her come out safe and sound I'll agree."

There was a rustling in the bushes for a few moments, then Maggie came rushing towards Old Moscow, and with her first breath begged him to lift her upon his horse and fly.

"No," he replied, firmly, "I can't do it."

"Why not? You have a rifle and the chief none."

"You don't rightly understand," he said. "It wouldn't be a hard matter for me to run away with you—could do it just as well as not—but it would be telling a falsehood, and I can't think of such a thing. I'm going to fight the red-skin, and may be killed, and it wouldn't do for me to go into the other world with an untruth burning on my lips."

"But if you should be killed? What then would become of me?" she gasped, shivering with terror at the thought of what then would be her fate.

"Then may Heaven have mercy upon you!" he answered, solemnly. "It will be a hard fight, and it isn't probable that either will escape. Horse Shoe, though a miserable red-skin, is strong, and a good fighter, and it's no child's play, and it is more than likely both will be killed. If that is the case remember this. Get on the horse and give him his head, and he'll go straight back, and you'll meet—"

"Philip?"

"I should think so," replied Old Moscow, with a smile at her earnestness, "and a whole lot of friends."

"Heaven be thanked."

"If I should get the worst of the fight run away, and be sure to take the rifle with you. Do you know how to shoot?"

"Yes."

"That's lucky. Now just get a little on one side and send up your prayers for me. I may need them."

"Be assured I will pray for you, most earnestly and devoutly."

"Is the pale-face ready?" asked the Indian.

"Yes."

Old Moscow looked well to his weapons, grasped his hatchet firmly, placed his knife between his teeth, hugged his horse well with his knees, and, after another word of caution and parting to Maggie, hoarsely shouted:

"Come on, red-skin, and do your worst, and Heaven be on the side of right and justice!"

The Indian forced his horse from the woods upon

a run, but did not, as Old Moscow had expected, immediately ride to attack him. He circled round and round, evidently watching for an opportunity to throw his tomahawk to advantage, and very much depended upon the first blow.

Had it not been dangerous, it would have been a beautiful sight to see how the champions of the two races maintained their reputation.

But suddenly, and when Old Moscow the least expected it, the tomahawk whizzed through the air, and nothing but a swift drawing back and throwing his horse upon his haunches saved him. As it was, the heavy weapon grazed his head as it passed.

Then a smile of triumph lit up the face of Old Moscow. He urged his horse forward, and, to his astonishment, the Indian did not move. He sat like a statue waiting the blow, and Old Moscow was sure of an easy victory. But just as he also was about to hurl his hatchet Horse Shoe changed his position with the rapidity of lightning, drew forth a concealed bow, fitted an arrow and fired.

The shaft was truly aimed, and its showy head was buried in the breast of the white man.

"Traacherous!" he groaned from between his set teeth, as he endeavoured to draw it out, but, failing to do so, broke off the wood and sent his hatchet whirling in revenge.

Pain and passion, however, had unsettled his aim, and it failed to touch the mark, and in the next breath their horses were close together, and their knives busy in the work of death. Wound upon wound followed, and their commingled blood spirted over the prairie. Yet the heavy buckskin shirt of Old Moscow offered some little protection, and by a desperate effort he succeeded in crippling the right arm of the Indian so as to render it almost useless, and caused him to relax his hold upon his knife. Then he struck a full blow at his throat, but missed his aim.

The wily Indian slipped under his horse and ran with startling rapidity towards where the girl was standing, a terrified witness, as well as the prize of that strange duel.

"Shoot him! Shoot him like a dog!" shouted Old Moscow, as he endeavoured to guide his horse, now frantic from the smell of blood.

His warning was too late! With a single cowardly blow the girl was stricken to the earth, the weapon wrenched from her grasp, raised and fired!

Old Moscow reeled and came very near falling, but he instantly braced himself, sprang to the ground, avoided the blow of the clubbed rifle and grappled his treacherous enemy with one hand, and at the same time drove his knife hilt deep into his heart with the other!

With a hollow groan the great chief of the Dacotahs fell backward and Old Moscow upon him. Then the frantic girl rushed to their side, but sank back aghast as she saw the terrible reality, and murmured:

"Dead! Oh, Heaven! Both dead!"

Stretched out stark and dead, with his rigid face turned upward, and the unclosed eyes fixed and staring, lay the once-haughty chief of the tribe of the Seven Fires. He had sung his last song, shouted his last war cry, performed his last act of treachery, and fought his last battle.

Above and upon him, with his face turned towards the earth, lay Old Moscow. He had not stirred from the position in which he had fallen. The knife was still grasped in his iron-muscle fingers, as if he was prepared to fight for the prize, even in death.

By the side of the strangely piled corpses sat the poor girl who had been called upon to pass through so much.

She too remained as she had fallen, staring with strained eyes and dumb lips at the fatal evidences of man's work. She sat more like a figure of stone than a living being, until a far-away sound caught her ear.

What it was she could not determine. It might be the rushing of wolves—might be Indians. But she had no power left to move. Yet, as the swiftly ridden horses came near—so near as to almost trample upon her and the dead—the long-lettered speech burst from its bondage in one wild and terrible scream.

"Great Heaven! Is it you? Have I indeed found you? Oh, Maggie, Maggie!" exclaimed one of the riders as he sprang to the ground.

"Philip! Dear Philip!"

And she raised herself, and tottered and fell into his arms.

Then a hasty examination was made, and the body of Old Moscow was carried to the little grove. The Indian they would not defile their hands with.

Greatly to their joy Old Moscow still lived, though he was upon the very brink of eternity, and, with the arrow head out from his breast, and the bullet from his side, and with his many wounds washed and dressed, he was restored to something like consciousness, and his first thought was for those he loved.

"The boy—the girl!" he gasped.

"Both safe," they replied, kneeling down upon either side and raining tears upon him.

"May Heaven be praised. And Horse Shoe?"

"Dead."

"Peace be to his soul."

"Boy," and Old Moscow's lips took upon themselves an unearthly tone, his eyes burned with a strange light, and his rugged face beamed with something like beauty, "boy, put your hand under my hunting-shirt and give me what you find there."

The medal, which had been presented to him for bravery, was held up to him, and his looks changed and his face flushed with something of pride as he continued:

"That I won at Moscow, when the sky seemed to rain and the earth vomit fire."

Then he breathed a short prayer in the tongue of his boyhood, his eyes closed, a groan and a gasp escaped him, he fell back upon the ground, and it was whispered by white lips that Old Moscow, the King of the Trappers, was dead!

But it was not so. Heaven kindly lengthened out his days, and, a few months later, when Philip Lee and his beautiful Maggie were made man and wife, there was no more happy face present than that of Old Moscow, though he could as yet scarcely move for his wounds.

Winter, however, found him busy with his traps, and he continued to follow his accustomed calling, varied now and then by the adventurous life of an Indian trapper and fighter. His scarred face and form were well known upon the frontier for many years, as also was his character for truth and matchless bravery, and every one of white blood was thankful that his trail of life had not reached

THE END.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE USE OF ALCOHOL.

A VERY important manifesto in regard to the use of alcohol in different forms, and especially for medicinal purposes, has been drawn up and signed by the leading men of the medical profession. This manifesto is intended to strengthen the hands of the Government in any attempt they may be disposed to make to restrict the sale of intoxicating beverages within stricter limits. The declaration runs as follows:—

"As it is believed that the inconsiderate prescription of large quantities of alcoholic liquids by medical men for their patients has given rise in many instances to the formation of intemperate habits, the undersigned, while unable to abandon the use of alcohol in the treatment of certain cases of disease, are yet of opinion that no medical practitioner should prescribe it without a sense of grave responsibility. They believe that alcohol, in whatever form, should be prescribed with as much care as any powerful drug, and that the directions for its use should be so framed as not to be interpreted as a sanction for excess, or necessarily for the continuance of its use when the occasion is past. They are also of opinion that many people immensely exaggerate the value of alcohol as an article of diet; and since no class of men see so much of its ill-effects, and possess such power to restrain its abuse, as members of their own profession, they hold that every medical practitioner is bound to exert his utmost influence to inculcate habits of great moderation in the use of alcoholic liquids. Being also firmly convinced that the great amount of drinking of alcoholic liquors among the working classes of this country is one of the greatest evils of the day, destroying more than anything else, the health, happiness, and welfare of those classes, and neutralizing to a large extent the great industrial prosperity which Providence has placed within the reach of this nation, the undersigned would gladly support any wise legislation which would tend to restrict within proper limits the use of alcoholic beverages, and gradually introduce habits of temperance."

This document is signed by about 300 of the most eminent physicians and surgeons of London, including the Presidents of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, Sir Thomas Watson, Sir Henry Holland, Sir William Ferguson, Sir James Paget, Mr. Cesar Hawkins, F.R.S.; the Director General of the Army Medical Department; Sir J. Ranald Martin, C.B., F.R.S.; the heads of the various branches in the medical department of the army, the Netley School, etc.

CENSUS OF NEW ZEALAND.—Abstracts of the Census returns for the past year have been made public, and prove conclusively that the colony is making satisfactory progress. The Census shows that the total population of the various provinces on the night of the 27th of February was 256,393, consisting of 150,856 males and 106,037 females, exclusive of aborigines. The province of Auckland stands highest in point of numbers—62,335, and Otago next, 60,722, Canterbury ranking third with 46,801 inhabitants. Among the leading towns

Dunedin is the most populous, containing 14,857 inhabitants; Auckland has 12,937; Christchurch, 7,931; Wellington, 7,908; and Nelson, 5,534. In most of the large towns the sexes are pretty nearly equalized. In seven places—Parnell, Onehunga, New Plymouth, the city of Nelson, Christchurch West, Newton, and Invercargill—the females preponderate over the other sex. The live stock returns show that there are in New Zealand 9,700,629 sheep, 436,592 head of cattle, 81,028 horses, 151,460 pigs, and 872,174 head of poultry; while the dairy produce of the year reached 5,193,072 lb. of butter, and 2,547,507 lb. of cheese.

PRISONERS IN NEWGATE.—The following is the official report of the state of Her Majesty's gaol of Newgate on Sunday, the 24th of December, 1871:—Prisoners under sentence of penal servitude for 14 years—males, 4; female, 1. Ditto, 12 years—male, 1. Ditto, 10 years—males, 5. Ditto, 8 years—male, 1. Ditto, 7 years—males, 15; females, 2. Ditto, 5 years—males, 8; female, 1. Ditto under sentence of imprisonment in Newgate—male, 1. Ditto, whose judgment is respited—males, 4; females, 3. Ditto, committed for trial—males, 33; females, 6. Ditto remanded for next session—males, 4. Ditto, for further examination—males, 9; females, 2. Total, 85 males, 15 females—100. In the infirmaries—male, 1. Patients not in the infirmaries—males, 8; females, 2.

THE QUEEN AND THE PEOPLE OF INDIA.—The Queen has found in a native journal, the *Som Prakash*, an ardent defender, and on a ground hitherto unnoticed in India, though essentially Hindoo. The writer says: "As yet we do not see any sign which will lead us to think that Republicanism can be for the good of the Arya tribes. Whatever may be the state of feeling in England, Queen Victoria is more beloved by the people of India. She possesses all those qualities which are considered by the Indians as the chief excellences of women, which the writers of the Hindoo Shastras have set down as the ornaments of the female sex, and the possession of which by Seeta and others led our illustrious bards to make them the themes of their poetical effusions. To give up the enjoyment of all worldly happiness with the death of their husbands is the vow and the religion of the women of India. The Queen having done so has gained their devout affections. She professes a different religion; that religion has no such law; and yet she is denying herself in endless ways and behaving as would a Hindoo female. This has made manifest her extraordinary greatness. Is it proper for the English community to compel a distressed widow to attend feasts, dancing and singing parties, etc., seeing that they are greatly distasteful to her? It is not right for the English nation to express dissatisfaction against a most excellent woman on the ground of such outward shows."

UNCLAIMED CHANCERY DIVIDENDS.—Mr. C. S. Spence writes to a contemporary on this subject. He says:—"Some days ago a deputation, consisting of Messrs. C. S. Spence, Henry Walsh, J. Minikin, J. P. Mountain James Moon, C. Teale, and J. Tankard, waited on Mr. Wheelhouse, M.P. for Leeds, with a view, if possible, of obtaining from the Government some increased facilities for the dissemination of the lists of unclaimed dividends on funds in the Court of Chancery. Mr. Wheelhouse, in accordance with the strongly expressed wish of the deputation, put himself into communication with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject. Some correspondence having passed between the honourable member and Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Lowe's secretary, the following extract from Mr. Ferguson's answer to Mr. Wheelhouse has been published:—"Dear Sir,—It has never at any time been considered that any dividends on funds in the Court of Chancery could properly be designated as 'unclaimed,' but it has been the practice, under an order of the Lord Chancellor made in 1854, to make out, about once in every five years, a list of the causes, matters, and accounts on which dividends are standing, which have not been dealt with for the last fifteen years preceding the issue of such list. This list has been published by fixing it up in the following public offices:—The Accountant-General's Office, the Writ Clerk's Office, the Office of Reports and Entries, the Registrar's Office, the Law Institution, Chancery Lane; the Solicitor to the Suitors, Southampton Buildings. Mr. Lowe finds that the Law Institution has been in the practice of transmitting to its members in the different provincial towns a copy of this list. At the end of five years the list which has been up is taken down in order to be replaced by one newly made out. Mr. Lowe is not aware that any more general notice than this could conveniently and usefully be circulated. There are not, so far as he is aware, any provincial offices connected with the Court of Chancery. The judges of the county courts have some jurisdiction in matters of equity, but it does not extend in any degree to funds standing in the name of the Accountant-General of

the Court in the books of the Bank of England, and a notice put up in the County Court could lead to no practical result, and might possibly lead to much disappointment to applicants. It has been considered best to give information in these cases through the medium of solicitors of the court, and under certain requirements as to the interest of the persons applying.—I am, dear sir, faithfully yours, R. FERGUSON." At the request of the deputation Mr. Wheelhouse proposes, early in next session, to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reconsider the matter, with a view to obtain the increased facilities which, in the opinion of the deputation, should be accorded, as it has been felt that greater publicity on this matter is extremely desirable.

A ROMANTIC INCIDENT.

THE family of Dudley, of Northamptonshire, bears for a crest a woman's head crowned with a helmet, the throat-latch loose, the visor thrown up, and her hair flowing and dishevelled. Its origin was as follows:—

In the latter part of the fourteenth century a brave knight named Hotot had a serious dispute with Sir Jasper Ringsdale concerning the title to a valuable piece of land; and as a last resort the rival claimants agreed to meet upon the disputed territory and settle the matter by a combat at arms. Hotot was well advanced in age, and upon the morning of the appointed day he found himself laid up with gout, and in such pain that he could not even arise from his chair. In this emergency his daughter Agnes, who held her father's honour very dear, and who desired much to retain the land, armed herself in full knightly panoply, and upon her father's well-known charger, and bearing a lance which she had often used in tilting sport, went forth at the time appointed and met Ringsdale. The fight was stubborn, but the maiden's suppleness of limb finally prevailed over the knight's greater physical strength, and in the end she dismounted him. Quickly leaping from her saddle, she drew her dagger, but Ringsdale had no desire to renew the combat; and when he had acknowledged himself vanquished his opponent loosened her throat-latch, and lifted up the helmet, thus letting down her flowing tresses upon her shoulders and discovering her sex. The Lady Agnes afterwards married into the Dudley family, and in honour of this chivalrous and heroic act her descendants have used the above crest with the motto—"Galea spes salvis," which is freely rendered, "In this (helmet) we trust our honour."

C.

FRENCH NOTIONS OF AN ENGLISH CHRISTMAS.—*La Liberté* thus describes the origin of the great English holiday:—"Christmas Day is better known as Boxing Day, because the inhabitants give each other a box (*boîte*) of bon-bons in token of friendship; after the dinner of turkey and plum-pudding guests and hosts repair to the theatres to witness the burlesques; over the door of the houses is suspended a sprig of box (*branche de buis*), and every time a lady and a gentleman cross each other there they kiss."

THE LATE LORD ELLENBOROUGH.—The late Lord Ellenborough's voice was the finest in either House of Parliament—sonorous, full, clear, and penetrating. Lord Ellenborough's figure was manly, the hair gray with the snow of eighty winters, yet still abundant. His features were as handsome as became his parentage. Some readers may remember Lord Campbell's description of the earl's mother—a distinguished toast of her day—who was so beautiful that whenever she came out to water the plants in her balcony a crowd immediately formed in the street below.

THE ROYAL PHYSICIANS.—It is stated that the offer of a baronetcy has been made to Dr. Gull, who has shared with Sir William Jenner the immense responsibility of medical attendance upon the Prince of Wales during his illness. Dr. Gull's presence at Sandringham has imparted great confidence to the medical profession, who are well acquainted with his sound and accurate diagnosis and intuitive insight. Dr. Gull is about 56 years of age. When he was sent for to Sandringham he held no medical connection with the Court or Royal Family, but he will in future enjoy a recognized and honourable position in the Prince's household. The services of Dr. Lowe will be acknowledged by a knighthood. He is M.D. Edinburgh, 1857, and is the author of several scientific papers in the medical journals, besides being a sound botanist.

EPIDEMICS ON THE SANDRINGHAM ESTATE.—Mr. Barrett, of Grimsdon, furnishes a tabulated detail of recent outbreaks of zymotic diseases at West Newton, the village annexed to Sandringham, of which the total population is about 300. In 1860, in two families of nineteen persons, there were fifteen cases of typhoid fever, with two deaths. In 1870-71, in three

families of twenty persons, there were fifteen cases with five deaths. An epidemic of scarlatina commenced at the beginning of August last, and has continued to the present time. Almost the whole village has suffered; the number of cases is not stated; the number of deaths is five. An epidemic of diphtheria occurred in 1868, affecting fifteen persons, of whom four died. A fresh case of typhoid fever has occurred recently at West Newton in the person of a young woman who had been employed at Sandringham House up to the date of her illness.

THE CALMUCK TARTARS.—Calmuck women ride better than the men. A male Calmuck on horseback looks as if he was intoxicated, and likely to fall off every instant, though he never loses his seat; but the women sit with more ease, and ride with extraordinary skill. The ceremony of marriage among the Calmucks is performed on horseback. A girl is first mounted, who rides off at full speed. Her lover pursues, and if he overtakes her, she becomes his wife, returning with him to his tent. But it sometimes happens that the woman does not wish to marry the person by whom she is pursued, in which case she will not suffer him to overtake her; and it is asserted that no instance occurs of a Calmuck girl being thus caught unless she has a partiality for her pursuer.

FACTIE.

AN ill-natured, fussy man is like a tallow candle. He always sputters and smokes when he is put out.

WHAT is the rope which public plunderers are now most anxious to take advantage of? Europe.

"I SAY, Tom, what did you clear by that stock speculation?" "Clear?" said Tom. "Why, I cleared my pockets."

WHAT is the difference between a blind man and a sailor in prison? One can't see to go, and the other can't go to sea.

WHY are washerwomen the silliest of people? Because they put out their tubs to catch soft water when it rains hard.

A REMARKABLY dirty man, soliciting his friend's advice how he should dress himself for a masquerade, received the following answer: "Only just wash your hands and face, and put on a clean shirt, and I'll be hanged if any one will know you."

A DOCTOR and a military officer became enamoured of the same lady. A friend asked her which of the two suitors she intended to favour. She replied that "it was difficult for her to tell as they were such killing creatures."

A LITTLE boy, after watching the burning of the school-house until the novelty of the thing had ceased, started down the street, saying: "I am glad the old thing is burned down; I didn't have my jogyfry lesson now!"

CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMAN.—Woman's crown of glory—her bonnet; woman's love—pin money; woman's hate—a stingy husband; woman's grief—one silk dress a year; woman's abhorrence—a hat year's mantilla, and no prospect of a new one.

It is said that a professor of natural science in one of our colleges used annually to astonish the students in natural philosophy by remarking, when the time came for assigning a certain portion of the textbook:—"The class may go to Thunder."

A HAPPY COMMUNITY.—"You never saw such a happy lot of people as we had yesterday," said a landlady to a newly arrived guest; "there were thirteen couple of them." "What, thirteen couple just married?" "Oh, no, no, sir; thirteen couple just divorced."

A SLY HINT.—A parishioner, wishing to give his pastor a hint to put more juice in his sermons, said to him one day, "I must get a seat nearer the pulpit, for by the time your words reach my ears the people in front of me have so taken the pith out of them that they are as dull as ditch water."

COMING DOWN.—A husband two years after marriage met an old friend who congratulated him upon his improved personal appearance, but said: "It seems to me you have grown smaller." "No wonder," was the reply; "ever since I saw you I have been coming down handsomely."

ONE of our vicinity deacons, nearly captured five boys who had been devastating his chestnut trees one Sunday afternoon. Shaking his fist after their retreating forms, he angrily shouted: "The sneaking little rascals! If I had hold of 'em one minute, I'd—!" Then, suddenly spying his pastor on the scene, he impressively added: "I'd pray for 'em!"

A WORTHY EXAMPLE.—"Well," said an old gentleman the other day, "I have been forty-seven years in the business, and can say what very few can say after such experience. In all that time, my friend, I never disappointed but one creditor."

"Bless me, what an example for our mercantile community!" replied the person addressed. "What a pity that one time occurred; how did it happen?" "Why," responded the old gentleman, "I paid the debt when it became due, and I never in all my life saw a man so much astonished as the creditor was."

A TEACHER FOR TEACHER.

Governess: "Q.—Yes! Well, what's the next letter?"

Charlie: "Vex next letter!"

Governess: "Yes! Come—make haste and tell me!"

Charlie: "Oo tell me!—Oo tum here to teach me, me not here to teach oo!"—*Fun.*

A LIBERAL EDUCATION.—A minister gave his son a liberal education, and he was examined for the position of principal of a high school, and was rejected. His father was excited greatly on hearing the news, and, hastily taking his hat, he rushed down the street, and ran full tilt against one member of the committee: "What does this mean?" he cried; "don't the committee know that my son can speak and write in four different languages?" "That may be," replied the committee-man, "but English is not one of them. We examined him only in English!"

INCONSOLEABLE.—A few days ago a child was crying in a street near Charing Cross. A compassionate lady, passing at the time, stopped and asked him what was the matter. The child replied, "Cos I've lost a pony mother gave me." "Ah, well, never mind," said the lady, "here is another for you," and proceeded upon her way, but had not gone far when she heard the little fellow bellowing more lustily than before. She turned back and again asked the cause, upon which the little urchin answered, "Why, if I 'adn't lost the first one, I should 'ave 'ad tappence."

CLEAR AND CONCLUSIVE.—In a case of assault and battery, where a stone had been thrown by the defendant, the following clear and conclusive evidence was drawn out of a Yorkshireman: "Did you see the defendant throw the stone?" "I saw a stone, and I'm pretty sure the defendant throwed it." "Was it a large stone?" "I should say it would be a largish stone." "What was its size?" "I should say a sizeable stone." "Can't you answer definitely how big it was?" "I should say it was a stone of some bigness." "Can you give the jury some idea of the stone?" "Why, as near as I recollect, it was something of a stone." "Can't you compare it to some other object?" "Why, if I war to compare it, so as to give some notion of the stone, I should say it war as large as a lump of chalk!" "But the distance—how long was it?" "Well, I should say about the length of a piece of string."

LORD ELDON AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP.

Travelling the circuit with a companion, who, according to a custom not uncommon in those days, always carried pistols with him and played them under his pillow, they slept at an inn. At dawn of day Mr. Scott discovered in his bedroom a man's figure, seemingly dressed in black. The intruder being harshly challenged, said:

"Please your honour, I am only a poor sweep, and I believe I've come down the wrong chimney."

"My friend," was the reply, "you have come down the right, for I give you a sixpence to buy a pot of beer, while the gentleman in the next room sleeps with pistols under his pillow, and had you paid him a visit he would have blown your brains out."

MRS. PARTINGTON ON DISEASE.—"Diseases is very various," said Mrs. Partington as she returned from a street-door conversation with Dr. Dolus. "The doctor tells me that poor old Mrs. Haze has got two buckles on her lungs! It is dreadful to think of, I declare. This disease is so various! One way we hear of people dying of hermitage of the lungs, another way of the brown creatures; here they tell us of the elementary canal being out of order, and there about tonsors of the throat; here we hear of the neurology in the head, there of an embargo; one side of us we hear of men being killed by getting a pound of tough beef in the sarcofagus, and there another kills himself by discovering his focal vein. Things change so that I declare I don't know how to subscribe for any disease now-a-days. New names and new nostrils take the place of the old, and I might as well throw my old herb bag away."

THE SALE OF LADY DON'S WARDROBE.—The following were amongst the articles comprising Lady Emily Eliza Don's wardrobe, sold by auction at Nottingham recently:—Four Australian albums, for 3l. 6s.; a "Theatrical Library," or a box filled with playbooks and bills, name block and button die, for 3l.; a small box filled with dried flowers and thirteen wigs, which fetched 1l.; eight pairs of leather shoes, six ditto boots, one pair of jack boots, one pair of

buckskin top boots, 1l. 10s.; two pairs of satin shoes, one pair of gold embossed shoes, and two pairs of velvet shoes, which brought 14s.; collar of St. George, three girdles, gold braid, and other things, realized 1l. 10s.; a jewel dagger, baton, and whip, 11s. A Roman sword and shield, four swords, and cutlase, after a lively competition were bought in at 2l. 6s. There were upwards of fifty beautiful silk and satin dresses of all shades, from plain black to the most rainbow-coloured hue, exposed for sale, besides an endless variety of other skirts and bodies. The silk dresses realized on an average 25s., one beautifully flowered silk dress, which was said to have cost 40l., was disposed of for 2l. 10s. A trunk filled with wigs fetched 1l. 17s. 6d., and an army surgeon's cocked hat and spauldette and case went for the same figure. Considerable amusement was caused at the sale of three tambourines, blue jacket, and the skin of a goat, made to fit on the body, which, however, only realized 16s. A sealskin jacket and muff were sold for 4l. 15s. There was in all upwards of 200 lots, and the whole sum realized must be something considerable. The sale lasted altogether about seven hours.

THE BRIDAL.

Ring the silver-toned marriage bells gaily,
There's a wedding at Christ Church to-night!

And with music and bright happy faces

The place is aglow with delight:

At the altar a young man and maiden

Are standing in nuptial array,

And the bride, with a ring and a blessing,

Her father's house leaveth to-day.

By her youth, and her sweet, girlish beauty,

She wins from all hearts a "God-speed,"

And a hope that the new path before her

Through earth's fairest gardens may lead,

That her hands only blossoms may gather,

That her heart may with joy ever thrill,

That her feet may never grow weary,

Till they press, at last, Faith's shining hill.

She will miss a fond mother's caresses,

She will miss a kind father's fond care;

When she yearns for the home of her girlhood,

She will only in spirit be there.

She has given her hand to a stranger,

Her heart he had won long before;

It is not that home ties are lessened,

But she loveth the husband still more.

Will there be, for these two, always sunshine?

Or will trouble and sorrow be theirs?

Will the new home prove ever a glad one,

Or sometimes be saddened by cares?

May the love that now glows in that household,

Growing dearer and sweeter each day,

Crown their lives till, in heaven's pure sunlight,

Life's shadows shall all pass away.

L. S. U.

GEMS.

With the humble there is perpetual peace.

The spirit of truth dwelleth in meekness.

A MAN'S enemies are those he should endeavour first to make his friends.

WITH the sweets of patience we season the bitterness of adversity.

HE that can please nobody is not so much to be pitied as he that nobody can please.

A TRUE friend eases many troubles, whereas one who is not so multiplies and increases them.

MORE than half the evils we endure are imaginary. So with our pleasures; most of our enjoyment consists in anticipation.

LEAVE nothing that is necessary in any matter undone—we rate ability in men by what they finish, not by what they attempt.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

POTATO SOUP.—Boil and mash potatoes enough to make about three pints when mashed; to three quarts of rich beef stock, ready boiling, add pepper and salt to the taste; stir the potatoes gradually into the boiling stock, then pass all through a sieve and return to the soup kettle; simmer five minutes, and serve with fried bread, or one head of celery; two spoonfuls of rice may be put to the stock, well boiled, and the potatoes added when all are done, then pass through the sieve, return to soup kettle, simmer five minutes, and serve.

YEAST.—The superiority of German beer and German bread is generally attributed to the kind of yeast employed, which is said to be more regular in its action than the ordinary ferment. It is prepared in the following way:—Three kinds of grain, viz., Indian corn, barley, and rye (all sprouting, are powdered and mixed, and then macerated in water at a

temperature of 65 deg. to 75 deg. C. In a few hours saccharification takes place. The liquor is then racked off, allowed to clear, and alcoholic fermentation set up by the help of a minute quantity of yeast. As fermentation progresses the globules of yeast reproduce themselves, attaining a diameter of 10 to 12 mm. Carbonic acid is disengaged during the process with much rapidity, and globules of yeast are thrown up by the gas and remain floating on the surface, where they form a thick scum, which is carefully removed and constitutes the best and purest yeast. When drained and compressed by an hydraulic press it can be kept from eight to fifteen days according to the season.

STATISTICS.

ATTENDANCE OF VISITORS TO THE EXHIBITION IN 1871.—The average number of visitors admitted to the Exhibition by payment on each day of the week was as follows:—

Monday (admission 1s.)	9,310
Tuesday	9,868
Thursday	10,151
Friday	7,604
Saturday	9,496
Wednesday " 2s. 6d.)	2,958

BET-ROOT SUGAR IN GERMANY.—From the 1st of September, 1870, to the 31st of August, 1871, above 61,000,000 cwt. of raw beet have passed the excise in the Zollverein. This is an excess of more than 9,000,000 cwt. over last year's return. The number of sugar factories was as follows:—Prussia and annexed States; 265, clearing 53,600,000 cwt.; Luxembourg, 2 factories; Bavaria, 4; Wurtemberg, 5; Baden, 1; Thuringia, 3; Brunswick, 25; total, 304 factories, or 8 more than last year.

MISCELLANEOUS.

M. A. BLOUIN proposes rendering petroleum less inflammable by keeping it for a month in contact with half its volume of vinegar.

MR. MATTHEW GREATHEAD, of Richmond, Yorkshire, died there on Sunday, in the 102nd year of his age. He was born at High Cunniscliffe, near Darlington, on the 23rd of April, 1770, and was believed to be the oldest Freeman in England, having been a member of a lodge for 75 years.

The death is announced, in letters from Anjou, of the Marquis of Breteux-Villiers, belonging to one of the oldest families in the province. He was out shooting, when, in his jumping over a ditch, the shock caused his gun to go off, and the whole charge entered his breast, killing him almost instantaneously.

THE LATE DUKE DE GIRONTE.—Among the legacies left by the Duke de Gironce in his will are, the sword he wore at Acolea, to Queen Isabella; his walking-stick to Don Francisco d'Assise; 6,000 francs to his secretary Bista; and a like sum to his aide-de-camp, Bassea. He appoints the Archduke Albert his executor, subject to the consent of his own nearest relatives.

THE CHANNEL FERRY SCHEME.—At a meeting of the Dover Town Council, held the other day, Mr. Abernethy, one of the engineers connected with the Channel Ferry Scheme, attended to explain its details to the members of the Corporation. The Mayor, Mr. Richard Dickson, was in the chair. Alderman Churchward introduced Mr. Abernethy, remarking that in his opinion the scheme with which that gentleman was associated was calculated to benefit the town of Dover to a very considerable extent. The explanations of Mr. Abernethy appeared perfectly satisfactory, and, after the assurances he had given as to the willingness of the promoters to meet the wishes of the authorities in reference to local matters, it was understood that any steps the Council might take would only be with a view of obtaining a *locus standi*, and not of offering a substantial opposition.

FOCUS OF EXAMPLE.—The poor woman who, with a scanty wardrobe, is ever neat and clean in her person amidst various and trying duties, is patient, gentle, and affectionate in her domestic relations, with small funds is economical and judicious in her household management, presenting every day a practical exposition of some of the best lessons in life, may be a greater benefactress of her kind than the woman of fortune, though she scatter a tithe of a large fortune in alms. The poor man whose regularity and sobriety of conduct co-operate with such a woman, who shows his fellow-workmen or townsmen what temperance, industry, manly tenderness, and superiority to low and sensual temptation, can effect in endearing a home which, like the green spot that the traveller finds in the desert, is bright even amid the gloom of poverty, and sweet even amid all the surrounding bitterness—such a man does good as well as the most eloquent writer that ever wrote.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALICE.—Both handwritings are very similar and very good.

PILL BOX.—There are too many inconsistencies in the statement to render it reliable.

R. S.—The verses entitled "The Parting Chords" have been received; they are in your usual style.

N. K. L.—A good spelling-book or dictionary contains the information. Price about a shilling.

MAGGIE.—1. You write a very nice, plain, bold hand. 2. Your matrimonial request will receive due attention.

E. W.—Considering the remedy already unsuccessfully tried, we should say that the broken parts can be serviceably re-united.

A CONSTANT READER.—The Foundling Hospital is situated in Guildford Street, very near to Brunswick Square.

ROSEBUD.—1. The handwriting, though rather careless, is good. 2. The colour of the hair is a pretty light brown.

CHYMUS.—Your amusing letter has been received, and in accordance with your wish its receipt is hereby acknowledged.

WHIRL VIOLET.—1. The hair is very pretty, and of a luxuriant dark brown colour. 2. The handwriting is particularly neat, legible, and good.

W. J. C. (Belfast).—Your melody of incongruities is declined with thanks. We were not previously aware that the close of day is marked by the "sun's bright ray in heaven's height."

LUCILLA.—1. Your idea of the pronunciation of the word is correct. 2. The only remedy is to bring about, if you possibly can, an improvement in the general state of your health. 3. The handwriting is very much cramped.

B. J. H.—In one letter the age is given as eighteen, in the other as twenty-two. Both cannot be correct. On the score of gallantry the former has been adopted. This also relieves you from a not very unusual embarrassment. "Too many lovers will puzzle a maid."

FLORENCE.—The principal objection to the handwriting is found in the too frequent use of the flourish. Were this omitted, the specimen would contain letters which are very well formed, and phrases very neatly and legibly penned.

A. W. W.—If upon such a purely personal matter you are so very lukewarm and undecided, you cannot expect any assistance from a stranger; from the particularly simple reason that as you will not help yourself you render it impossible for any one to serve you.

J. A. S.—1. It sometimes happens that compilers go to the same source for their facts, just as merchants receive their raw material from the same port. 2. We cannot offer you any encouragement concerning your friend's effusions; nevertheless, if we receive them they will be attentively perused.

F. B. L.—We cannot advise you to attempt the cure without professional assistance. You should mention the new specific to the surgeon who has charge of the patient, and express to him your desire that such a remedy should be tried if there is nothing in the constitution of the sufferer to which it can be objectionable.

FICKLE NELLIE.—1. Yes. 2. No. 3. About 2l. 10s. 4. In the case of marriage by licence under the 4 Geo. IV. c. 76, it is necessary that one of the parties shall, for the space of fifteen days immediately preceding such licence, have had his or her usual place of abode within the parish or chapel within which such marriage is to be solemnized.

A CONSTANT READER.—The onions, after being properly cleaned, should be immersed in salt. The brine which will then exude must be poured away, and the vegetable placed in jars so as to reserve a third of the space of each jar. Into this space pour strong vinegar and close the jar or bottle so that the air will be efficaciously excluded.

FIVE YEARS' SUBSCRIBER.—We cannot make anything out of the words as you have written them. The orthography of the first requires correction. Then if its tense were changed, if also the mood, tense, and person of the last verb were altered, the following translation might be arrived at: "Did I not forewarn that you would come to grief?" Very likely this is what you intend to convey.

WILLIAM W.—The component parts of chutney sauce are: A quarter of a pound each of stoned raisins, brown sugar, mustard seed, and salt, an ounce of Cayenne pepper, three ounces of garlic, a pint of unripe gooseberries, and a quart of strong vinegar. Bruise the mustard seed,

boil the gooseberries in some of the vinegar, and pound the garlic well in a mortar. Gradually mix the whole well together, and let the bottles into which the mixture is eventually put be well corked and tied over.

CONSTANCE.—Young men of twenty are as a rule too old to be smitten at first sight. They are, without doubt, much too young to marry, and therefore find it prudent to abstain from showing any preference. This is consistent with their position as students in the school of female beauty and character, and if they are well advised they require time to consider. Marriages made under the influence of a sudden passion of any kind usually produce much unhappiness.

M. A. S.—There is much exaggeration about your jottings "Tis One of the Crowd Obscure." Being attended to his last earthly resting-place by honest men who knew his worth, what more could be wished for your hero as far as this world is concerned? Obscurity in such a case is a misnomer. He was as much cared for in his circle as the rich man is in his, nor would he be entitled to expect to receive an attention which he could not have bestowed.

THE PARTING CHORDS.

I heard a lone maiden, and thus was the breathing
Which broke from the strings of her sweet, thrill-
ing lyre,
In heart-stirring sounds, of love's eloquent wreathing
It seemed to chord high, at a parting desire;
And wishes too, breathed out with fervent emotion,
Portrayed in her bosom pure feelings of love—
"While he is away on the billowy ocean
My prayers shall attend him wherever he rove.

"He's gone," she sighed, "gone, o'er the tremulous
billow!

Alas! and his absence I sadly deplore;
Oh! and the moments when under yon willow
He fondly embraced me, and left me so sore;
But yet his last words were balm to my bosom.
"I leave thee," he said, "for the far, fresh blue sea,
And it is not for aye—with gems for thy blossom
Ere long I'll return again homeward to thee."

So cheer, trusting maid, up! Hope's confident
wreathings
Up elevate high the sweet strings of love's harp,
And th' mystical promptings of faith's inner wear-
ings

Inspire thee to sing sweet; and why should we cary
To be severed a month or two? Love's fond devotion
No distance can sever—'tis a cord naught can part,
As fine and as strong as an angel's emotion;
And meeting again is a balm for all smart.

And then she sweetly sang:
"Oh, the happy home-come! the dear, dear coming
home!

Blow, ye breezes, fill his sails from footropes to
head's dome,
Wake up, ye fair winds, wake up! the sleeping echoes
ring.

And bid the billows shake up, and quick my loved
one bring.

Oh, think how I shall greet him; he'll clasp me to
his breast,
And, oh, my lyre will chord so, when tuned upon
that rest!

Amen! Oh, I anticipate! this earthly joy the best."

R. S.

CERIALD, thirty, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a well-educated young lady of about twenty-four.

LUCY, nineteen, short, rather stout, black curly hair, and dark eyes. Respondent to be fair, tall, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

TODY, a broker's assistant, thirty-two, 5ft. 3in. dark hair and eyes, would like to marry a young woman of about thirty.

GEORGE, forty, medium height, dark, a widower with one child. Respondent should be fair and about the same age; a widow not objected to.

DORRIS, a farmer's daughter, would like to marry a young man about thirty, who is good tempered and able to maintain an industrious wife.

A SCOTCH LASSIE, twenty-four, dark eyes and hair, would like to marry a young man who is capable of maintaining a wife comfortably.

MAUDE, seventeen, petite, dark, ladylike, pretty, musical, and fond of home. Respondent must be good tempered, gentlemanly, and in a good position.

NELLY, twenty-two, tall, fair, amiable, domesticated and cheerful. Respondent must be dark, good tempered, and have a good income.

LIZ, twenty, medium height, loving, fond of home, industrious, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-three; a mechanic preferred.

COMPANION TO LIZ, twenty-five, medium height, good tempered, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be over her own age; a mechanic preferred.

ANNE, eighteen, tall, slender, good looking, amiable, and has a little money. Would like to marry a gentleman, dark and handsome.

SARAH, twenty-two, medium height, very fair, musical, and good looking, would like to meet with a tall, fair young man about twenty-eight. Respondent must be musical and loving.

GWYNETH, twenty-three, medium height, fair complexion, sandy whiskers, and monotache, has income, and musical. Respondent must be good looking, and possess a loving heart.

EDITH, nineteen, tall, fair, golden hair, even white teeth, musical and domesticated, would like to correspond with a tall, fair young gentleman in a good position.

MOSCOW AND VICTOR, blacksmiths in partnership, doing a very good trade, would like to marry two young ladies. "Moscow," twenty-five, 5ft. 8in., fair, blue eyes. "Victor," twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., dark, black eyes.

JESSE P., eighteen, tall, fair, good looking, a good dancer, of respectable means, well educated, and cheer-

ful. Would like to commence a correspondence, with a view to matrimony, with a gentleman who is tall, dark, good looking, fond of home, and in a good position.

LOUISE M., tall, rather dark, nice looking, domesticated, would like a loving wife. Wishes to marry a tall, dark, nice-looking young man of a loving disposition and fond of home.

ALICE, twenty-three, 5ft. 3in., gray eyes, dark hair, good looking, would like to marry a nice young mechanic who is sober and fond of home. She is a domestic servant, and would make a good wife.

MILLY, twenty, medium height, brown hair, dark eyes, amiable, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, fond of home, and able to keep a wife.

ANNETTE S., twenty-four, medium height, dark, good looking, thoroughly domesticated, the widow of a tradesman with one little girl four years old. Respondent must be kind and industrious.

ESTHER and ANNIE.—"Esther," twenty-three, 5ft. 4in., dark hair and eyes, cheerful, loving, and domesticated. "Annie," eighteen, medium height, fair, loving, would make any steady man a good wife. Respondents must be dark, manly, musical, and fond of home.

BLUE-EYED SUSAN, twenty-one, medium height, brown hair, dark blue eyes, has been in her present situation five and a half years. Respondent must be about twenty-four, tall, moderately good looking, steady, loving, and in good circumstances.

MAGGIE, twenty-four, tall, fair, dark hair and eyes, good looking, ladylike, domesticated, has some money, and expectations; wishes to become acquainted with a respectable young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about thirty, tall, fair, have light hair and eyes, be good looking, and steady; a sergeant or reserve policeman preferred.

NELLIE and POLLY, domestic servants, would like to marry two respectable young men, joiners or mechanics. "Nellie" is twenty-five, medium height, brown hair and blue eyes, and is very fond of home. "Polly" is twenty-four, medium height, brown hair and eyes, is loving and amiable. Respondents must be tall, dark, and fond of home.

SPRITE and IMP.—"Sprite," twenty-seven, medium height, dark, good looking, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, fair, not under thirty, and able to offer a comfortable home. "Imp," twenty, medium height, fair, nice looking, industrious, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, about twenty-four, steady, and industrious.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

BARNARD and ELLIOTT are responded to by—"Ada" and "Pauline," sisters. "Ada," eighteen, medium height, dark brown hair, gray eyes, pretty, loving, and fond of home. "Pauline," seventeen, light brown hair, dark eyes, and of a loving disposition.

GEORGE S. by—"Ada," eighteen, medium height, fair, and industrious.

ROSE by—"Folly P.," nineteen, medium height, dark hair, good tempered, and domesticated.

WILD ROSE by—"Ronald," nineteen, dark, and in the Civil Service.

ARCHIBALD by—"A Cook," twenty-three, medium height, brown hair and eyes.

ANGELA by—"Albany," 5ft., fair, well built, good looking, highly educated, fond of home, with good income.

G. H. by—"Loving Polly," twenty-eight, medium height, who would make a kind and loving wife to a good husband.

MARY by—"J. H.," twenty-five, 5ft. 10in., stout in proportion, fair complexion, light whiskers, hazel eyes, a tailor, and a Roman Catholic.

TWO JOHNS by—"Mabel and "Lily," "Mabel" is twenty, tall, dark, and good looking. "Lily" is eighteen, fair, and considered very handsome.

YOKOHAMA by—"R. J. H.," eighteen, tall, light complexion, blue eyes; an orphan entitled to money; and—"M. J. M.," twenty, tall, fair complexion, Auburn hair, hazel eyes, and would dearly like to go abroad.

JOHN by—"M. A. S.," who answers to his requirements, and thinks she would be worthy of him; and—"A. S.," twenty-four, a domestic servant, tall, fair, would try to make "John" a good, industrious, loving wife.

TOM and HARRY by—"Emma" and "Lizzie," "Emma" is twenty-six, has dark hair and eyes, and thinks she would suit "Tom." "Lizzie," nineteen, dark hair and eyes, thinks she would suit "Harry." Both are of medium height, good tempered, domesticated, and would make good wives to loving husbands.

THE SCOTCH LADIES by—"Two Domestic Servants," "Maggie," twenty-two, medium height, dark eyes, light complexion, and pleasant disposition. "Nelly," twenty-four, medium height, dark eyes, fair hair, real cherry; and—"Rose" and "Lillie." They answer to the advertised requirements.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by SIDNEY A. SMITH.

